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THE

UNFORTUNATE MAN.

VOL. III.

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THE UNFORTUNATE MAN.

BY

CAPT. FREDERIC CHAMIER, R.N.

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF A SAILOR."

By heaven! I'll hate him everlastingly
Who bids me be of comfort any more.
SHAKSPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
(SUCCESSOR TO HENRY COLBURN.)

1835.

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THE MOST UNFORTUNATE MAN IN THE WORLD.

CHAPTER I.

"——Dead, ay and cold."

"WHAT 'S in a kiss?" has not the affianced lover a right to such a gentle proof of love and affection? In Russia, as the gentleman falls upon one knee and kisses the hand, the lady bows her head and kisses the cheek. The French and Italians kiss each other as a common salutation, and as they rub their greasy faces together, they express a welcome which the New Zealanders feel when they rub noses on a reconciliation, or when friends long separated meet again. The French unmarried lady

never presents her lips, but her cheeks may be innocently saluted: the reason given by Voltaire is curious; it has reference to the nerves which lead to the lips, as coming directly through the heart. In his Philosophical Dictionary, the difficulty, if there is one, is explained; and to that I refer my reader. But all the cold formalities of society differ excessively from the "long long kiss of love and youth and beauty—all concentrated into one focus,"—such as is impressed upon the lips of those who have just confessed their love.

Lucy felt the thrilling sensation as the major pressed her to his heart: he did not disguise his passion or his joy; he felt Lucy was his for life; he felt he now had a partner to share his prosperity, and in the fervour of his excitement he warmly impressed it on his lady's lips.

We leave him to all the pleasant prospects of the future; we leave him, having received from the lips of the only one he ever loved a confirmation on her part; and in the bright visions of the coming happiness, he fell into "slumbers sweet" and balmy repose.

Far different were the thoughts of the agitated, miserable Lucy.

It has been truly said that if a woman once loves she never can forget; and we have seen the devotedness of that sex, even when their husbands have been proved to be the most worthless of the creation. We have seen them true to the last, and weeping and wailing in the overflowings of grief, as the one who had used them worst was led a felon to a scaffold. With all her confessions of affection to Henderson, she felt her heart preoccupied—she felt she had wronged our unfortunate hero; and scarcely an hour had elapsed since she had pledged her heart to one, and now held a note in her hand written from the other: it was brief and run thus:—

"Dearest Lucy,

"I waited at the gate from one o'clock, the hour I fixed in my last letter from Hamburgh, until four o'clock, when I placed this under it. To-morrow I will be at the gate again at the same hour. I have not yet seen

my father or Jane, but I hastened to one I love even more than those who are near and dear to me.

"Your most affectionately attached,

"ROBERT."

She stood like a statue; she knew not what to do. Simpson had betrayed her—that was evident, and to trust her again would be the height of imprduence. Mary was in bed—if she had seen Robert or not was uncertain. To-morrow, the very hour on which her mother had engaged to go to Richmond with the major, Sir Jacob, and herself, had been fixed upon by Robert for the interview. Well she knew that she was suspiciously watched, and that now, as the marriage was nearly settled, the quick eyes of her mother would follow her footsteps, and that to elude her at the very moment was almost impossible. To see him she was resolved, but what to do, or how to act, she could not determine. She formed a million of excuses in order to evade the Richmond trip; but her mother was not likely to be deceived: besides,

lovers like the major are generally early visiters, and they know that women are pleased by punctual attendance. Having weighed the matter, she resigned herself to her pillow, which that night was not pressed by a sleeping head. A girl whose heart is pledged to one and her hand to another, is not likely to experience the blessings of repose.

The interview with Mary was unsatisfactory; she, it appears, in passing by the gate—in all probability to look out for some little remembrance of the dragoon—had at seven o'clock found the note, and, owing to her being obliged by her mother to be absent from the drawing-room until nine, she had no opportunity of delivering it. The little adept in female deception soon recommended that Lucy should write a letter, which Mary would place at the *poste restante*, and that the following day should be fixed for the meeting, and then the explanations would take place.

Turn we to our unfortunate hero himself. No sooner had I left the gate, before which I had passed many an anxious moment, than I betook

myself to the house of my father. I dreaded the first meeting with Jane, and I shuddered when I thought that the hand which would press her's would be that of a murderer's. My well-known knock soon summoned the servants; there was a smile upon each face, such as courtiers wear when their king passes—a kind of constrained endeavour to be supposed happy in the sunshine of royalty.

"My father is within?" I asked.

"Yes," was the reply, "but he is——"

"Is what?" I interrupted, for nothing startles a man more than a suppressed kind of communication, leaving everything to doubt and nothing to reality.

"Is very, very unwell, and in bed; the doctor has desired he may not be disturbed, and he has just fallen into a sound sleep."

I passed on, ascended the stairs, and entered the drawing-room. There sat Jane, as usual, at work; she never was a sloth, idleness was an enemy she never encouraged. Her air I thought more pensive than formerly, but still she was cheerful, although apparently resigned to some

fate, which of course I fancied must be mixed with the name of Mizen. Our first embrace was warm and cordial, but I thought she felt as if a serpent stung her, and she became cool and embarrassed. "Your father," she said, "is ill, very ill, and you have arrived at an opportune moment: yesterday we had no hope of his recovery, to-day the symptoms are more favourable; but such is his weakness, nay, imbecility, both of mind and body, that a recovery is hardly a very desirable event."

The gloomy denunciation struck upon my very heart, and my cheek, the index of the mind, betrayed by its blanched paleness how little I had expected such a communication.

"And what is his complaint, Jane?" I asked; "and how is it that in your letters you never mentioned this growing calamity, for surely it must have been gradual and plainly perceptible?"

"By one," replied my sister, "who was not daily, hourly with him, perhaps it might have been distinguished; but the first failings of the mind are but little regarded: the change is so

gradual, that one becomes familiar with the wreck without observing the progress. Suffice it to say, he has fallen twice in epileptic fits, which have partially paralyzed the brain."

"But there are, I hope, still prospects of a total recovery."

Jane shook her head, and the large tears fell upon the work before her; "Never, never will he again see as he has seen, or feel as he has felt; the quick sensibility of his mind is numbed and chilled, and the brightness of his intellect has passed from him: however, you will best judge when you see him, for he is awake now, I know, by the knocking of the nurse."

I descended, for he was in bed on the ground-floor of the house. The room was partially darkened, and the curtains being drawn round the bed, rendered any object sufficiently obscure to one entering from a strong light. I approached with secret awe and dread; I drew the curtain, and I saw the glassy eye of dulled intellect fixed indifferently upon me. It was evident my own father did not recognise his unfortunate son: in vain I endeavoured to force back

recollection by my voice—it was unheeded. I took his hand—it never pressed mine with all the fondness of a father, but remained cold and clammy in my heated palm. It was in vain I tried every method to rouse him to a recognition; the words which he uttered with difficulty, were not addressed to me, and as in childish imbecility he spoke of trivial objects, I never was heeded, never regarded,—and the cold expression, the almost perfect heartless indifference, struck me to the very heart. I had outlived the hope of a parent's dying blessing; and now I needed it, for well I knew the tidings which would soon reach my sister, would sever her from me, and all the bonds of affection and duty would be at once dissolved. How long I gazed in sorrow and anguish I know not, for when, in all the horrors of convulsion, the distorted features, the almost ineffectual gasping for breath, the struggle for existence came on, I could not bear the heart-rending sight, and I left the room. A long sigh was the first proof that the spark was not extinguished; then came the same restlessness,

the same indifference to objects once familiar and beloved, and again a repetition of the attack.

It was evident the scene was fast drawing to a close. Day after day he lingered, until nature could no longer withstand the unremitting attack: the forerunner of death was heard in his throat, as the pant for breath rattled through the accumulated mucus. Then came they who had long served him with fidelity and with credit. The bed was surrounded by his family and his domestics; the curtains were drawn back; and as the last indistinct announcement of life was audible, Jane had taken one hand in her's, and on her knees was wrapt in prayer—that the gloom of the day might pass, and the light of eternity bless her aged parent. All hung their heads and scarcely dared to look; the medical attendant alone remained erect: he placed a glass near the mouth, and observing the polished surface undimmed by moisture, said in a trembling voice, "He is no more!" Then did I think my miseries complete; then were audible the

sobs of those who long had known his mildness and his benevolence, from whose mouth the words of anger had never escaped, but who had gone through his career of life without a blemish. He died! and oh, how different was the calm, the contented appearance he wore in death, to all the struggles for breath, the grasp at existence, the exertion for life! He lay stretched upon his bed, with a smile of contentment on his rugged countenance, and seemed to experience the heaven which the prayers of that devoted and affectionate daughter had gained for her much-loved, much-cherished parent.

It is in vain at this length of time to recall the sensations of horror which thrilled my frame. In early life I was no favourite, and my misfortunes had alone gained me commiseration. I retrieved his affection, when by my assiduity and attention I endeavoured to force myself upon the notice of the public, and when in my studious hours I ventured upon the path of literature, and succeeded even beyond my own vain expectations. This was previous to my travels, and well I paid for it

afterwards. Then, at the very time when I expected to hear the voice of age cheering me by its experience to continue my labours—when I calculated that all the frivolities of youth would have been obliterated, I returned to my home to witness the last struggle of my parent, and to see him slide from the world without a word of recognition, without the lisp of a blessing, without one expression to guide or to counsel me as to my future life. It is useless repining; and if I were to weep over all my woes, little of pleasure would be found; like the flash of lightning through the storm, which only illumines to make the darkness more visible. True are the words of the French poet, philosopher, and historian:

> "Quelquefois dans nos jours consacrés aux douleurs,
> Par la main du Plaisir nous essuyons nos pleurs,
> Mais le Plaisir s'envole et passe comme une ombre,
> Nos chagrins, nos regrets, nos pertes, sont sans nombre."

Well can I vouch for the truth of this. To weep would be to wish with the prophet, "O that mine eyes were a fountain of tears!" The last sad duty was soon paid. At the expiration

of the week the mimic mockery of woe took place. Mutes were placed at the door; the mourners, all anxious to revel, flocked to the house; the undertaker, dressed in deepest mourning, distributed the crapes and the gloves, calculating his enormous profits; and after a vain parade, ridiculous from the hired weepers, the ostentation, the pageantry of the show, the burial was concluded, and the dead shut out for ever from the sight. I remember that this funeral struck me the more forcibly, from the body being lowered by men underneath; it seemed, when apparently unaided by mortal hands sinking into the vault, to be like death having gained his victory and seized his victim. A deep groan escaped from one who had attended the funeral—it was Banana, who had returned to bury his brother. Then came the general separation of a once united family. The fortune was divided, the establishment was broken up, and each was destined to seek his own comfort.

It is requisite to trace back a little. On my finding my father so ill, I resolved not to quit

his bedside; but, owing to his having fallen into a sleep, the day following I rode down to Lucy's house, and found her note: I never stopped to read it, until I was again at home. Finding it was uncertain if I should be able to keep the appointment, I wrote a short letter, mentioning the state of my father's health, and promising to write again when his recovery or convalescence would warrant my absence. This note I as usual directed to Simpson, and she as usual betrayed the confidence to Mrs. Stackpole; and hence the consummation of my misfortune in regard to Lucy. My note was given to Mrs. Stackpole about ten o'clock on the morning of the appointment, in which I distinctly stated the utter improbability of my keeping it; and, as the letter had some reference to Mary, Mrs. Stackpole watched her motions a little more closely. Simpson was examined relative to Mary's being a confederate, and this was easily proved. Accordingly, Mrs. Stackpole commenced operations against Lucy by accusing her of still having a disreputable attachment

to me, even after the acceptance of the major. In vain the poor girl defended herself; for just as she thought she had escaped the rigid cross-examinations, her mother asked if she had not written to me the day before. It must be an adept in lying to contradict a fact without wavering; and although Lucy's education had been neglected, and although the example of French governesses and intriguing maids, not to mention her mother, were always before her, yet nature and innocence are firm guardians, and are not so easily beaten from the field. She could not deny it, or perhaps wishing to do so, for she still clung to the hope of again seeing me. She betrayed the falsehoods by her blush, and after faltering a little, the truth was extracted.

"Well," said her mother, "since I see how desperately your heart is set upon this negro purchaser, it would be cruel for me at once to break your hopes. I am confident you never will be happy with the major whilst your heart is with Robert; I will therefore give you another chance. Your supposed

lover is now in England, and you have received a note from him, and written one to him. Reports have reached me that he has actually persuaded this Russian, who is to be his wife, to come to this country, and that now he is seeking your ruin by a continuation of clandestine visits; his lady is aware of the attachment to you, and he, having found that the wealth of his princess is all in slaves, of which he ought to be a good judge, and that the property cannot be realized in Russia and transferred here, thinks he has made rather a bad speculation, and is inclined to handle your twenty thousand pounds, then trust to an emperor's permission to travel, or the probability of a confiscation of property, by forgetting to ask such permission. This is my view of the case. You say you have appointed to meet him at one o'clock at the garden-gate. I will be there with you. If he comes, I will manage to release you from the engagement with the major, and I will give my unqualified consent to your union: so certain am I that his love is nothing, but that he seeks

your hand as a mere speculation, that I will run the hazard. If he is sincere, it is not the paltry distance of a mile, or yet three hundred, which would keep him from you. If he is not sincere, he will say that he knows your love, and that you can keep until he is disposed to marry you. Have you no pride, Lucy? Has all the blood of the Stackpoles oozed from your veins, that you can allow yourself to be thus treated, thus neglected, thus considered? If at the appointed time that man is not at the gate, or if one hour afterwards he does not appear, a parent's curse shall blight your fancied happiness, and the day which sees you his wife, shall see me deprived of a daughter I have ever fondly loved and cherished, and who would then have repaid my kindness by the worst ingratitude."

"My dearest mother," the trembling girl replied, as the fear of the curse vibrated through her; "forbear to think so meanly of me. I accept the offer, I know his love, his sincerity, his honourable attachment to me, and I do not be-

lieve one word about the Russian. I have fixed him for one o'clock, and he, by not having answered the note, intends to come; for if the rains of heaven half deluged the earth; if the coldest day that ever nipped your Russian was to occur; if all the storms and thunder and lightning which ever blasted trees, or wrecked a ship, should come again—nay, if an earthquake should take place, I am certain, I am confident, he would brave them all to come to me. He has before walked for hours at that gate to see me, and did so the day before yesterday, therefore, I know his sincerity, and am happy to make this agreement with you—that if he comes, he is to be mine without an elopement; if he does not come, you shall see I have sufficient spirit to resent the insult, and at once to spurn so wavering a heart: he can have no business, superior in claims to those of his heart; and if he had, what is love if it cannot find an excuse to postpone it?"

"Agreed," replied Mrs. Stackpole; "and if he fails you will appoint the day the major has

already suggested for the marriage, and promise not to receive or write another letter."

"On my honour, as your daughter, I pledge myself to this; and I expect you will pledge the same, to keep your word if he should come, and that you will use no means to keep him away."

"I pledge it," replied the mother; "and to show you my sincerity, we will both go to the drawing-room, where we will remain until a quarter to one; we will then go to the gate, you shall conceal me, and when he clasps you in his arms I shall see it, come forward, and bless you both. It is now twelve o'clock, you may place any signal you may have preconcerted; in short, if you require it, I will leave you here in the garden, for I know I can trust to your honour, when your character, your welfare in life, and a parent's blessing is at stake. Now come with me or remain here."

Lucy preferred the former, for although she had not the slightest doubt of the sincerity of Robert, yet she had vast misgivings as to the

neutral part of her mother's intentions; it never occurred to the silly girl, that if Simpson had accidentally dropped one letter, she might drop another. She was convinced of her Robert's affection, and never gave herself time coolly to weigh the reasons why her mother should be so confident, or why she should suddenly consent to a man she had so lavishly abused; nay, with the prospect of a union with the man of her choice, her first love, (which, by-the-by, the French say, 'one never marries,') she became absorbed in the realization of future happiness, and thus passed the rapid car of time, until the three-quarters after twelve struck its long chime. Mrs. Stackpole looked at her daughter, they put on their bonnets, and walked down the long walk to the rendezvous.

"You had better open the gate, my dear Lucy," said her mother; "and as sometimes at least in my younger days gentlemen were before, instead of after their time, so your warm-hearted and devoted man may by accident have done the same."

Lucy opened the gate, but no Robert was

there; she slipped a piece of paper, on which was written 'come in,' and as the hour of one struck, the poor girl's countenance began to change from hope to despair. Robert was ever punctual, and now to fail when most wanted was a serious calamity.

"Is he there?" asid Mrs. Stackpole; "I thought I saw a person coming that way." The eager daughter opened the gate,—it was a workman going to his labour; for near the gate a speculator was building, or rather running up the outside wall, about one brick thick, of a future 'desirable residence.'

"It is a quarter past," said Mrs. Stackpole; "my dear Lucy, your lovers are not very exact, at least one of them. Now I will stake my reputation (that was a heavy bet,) that the major, who really is sincere in his attachment, and who I know does not harbour the slightest suspicion that your heart is pre-engaged, will be to a moment to his time: he said he would come at half-past two, in order to show you the zoological gardens: mark my word, that his heart will tell him the time, or perhaps, as it

beats quicker now than formerly, he will be before his time. Look, Lucy, there is Mr. Ganjam at last; run, my dear, and open the gate."

"It is another workman," said Lucy rather pettishly; "Robert is slim and elegant, but that fat man could scarcely be mistaken for him. What can have become of him, I wonder! Perhaps," said Lucy, catching at the thought, "perhaps one of the workmen took the note, and poor Robert has never received it; or perhaps Mary never placed it in the right place, or has forgotten it."

"Upon my word, Lucy, a very nice school you are bringing your sister up in—a girl only fourteen to be employed by her elder sister to frustrate a wish of her parent, and to be taught how to carry on assignations and appointments, and to wear the face of duplicity; I wonder what good she may be expected to come to!"

Lucy scarcely heard a word, she kept opening the gate whilst her eyes streamed with tears: Mrs. Stackpole keeping cautiously in the place allotted to her, so as not to give the

slightest handle to suspicion, and continuing a kind of running-fire in the way of conversation. "No, no, Lucy, all your other letters went, and as we were at Richmond yesterday, none of us could have removed it; and we know that those who work hard for their livelihood are not likely to come half a mile out of their way on a curiosity visit. No, no, my dear, if he has not received it, rely upon it that I will not force you to keep your promise; but that, indeed, is catching at a shadow. Dear fellow! I dare say he is now sitting on a sofa with that charming, dear, delightful, rich Russian princess with the long name. My dear, it is half-past one."

"I heard it strike," replied the daughter, as she walked before the gate, taking short turns, as all anxious people do, and walking at a pace, the rapidity of which she was quite unconscious of. In vain, as she turned, her eyes were directed to the road—no slim figure like her Robert was to be seen; some drabs of maids carrying baked meat in brown dishes, and followed at a little distance by a porter-boy, with

a row of bright handles sticking out of his case, occasionally passed, and now and then a bricklayer returning to his avocations was discernible: but a quarter to two had struck, and certainly up to that moment the amorous Robert Ganjam had not, as a sailor would say, "hove in sight."

"Pray, Lucy, my dear, have you left off corresponding with Miss Ganjam?" said Mrs. Stackpole, who was anxious to draw her daughter into a conversation relative to her lover, in order to work upon her mind the more surely afterwards, "for I have not seen or heard of her for these last two months."

"No, mamma," replied the girl, keeping her eyes fixed upon the road; "ever since Mr. Ganjam fell sick, which is now two months since, I have not received a word from her; indeed, I believe they took the old gentleman to Tunbridge Wells, for whenever I have called I never was admitted, and the answer was always, that the family were out of town. Oh! here is a gentleman on a grey horse, it must be he."

Even Mrs. Stackpole's confidence began to waver; the rider was coming along at a lover-like pace, and the grey certainly did look very much like the one the Unfortunate Man always rode. Alas! alas! it passed, and another passed, and the disappointment occasioned by one was followed by the appearance of another, until the clock struck two. Mrs. Stackpole looked at her daughter, who had burst into tears, and who very shortly gave vent to numerous ungenerous ideas of Robert; she lingered near the gate, but 'hope deferred maketh the heart sick,' and she soon felt the painful truth, that the joy was not to come, at least that day.

With a heart almost broken between love and pride, and anger and contempt, she followed her mother home, having at a quarter past two taken her long last lingering look. She was resolved to act up to her word, for she was a girl of high principle, and of a good heart. Her mother's conduct, and her father's harshness, had driven her to this painful situation; for had Robert been refused in a kind and ge-

nerous manner, in all probability the impossibility of the match being desirable might have been shown even to Lucy's mind; but when she saw herself ungenerously opposed, she could not tear the object from her heart, and she consented to duplicity, in order to render the separation, if it should come to that, the less baneful in Robert's eyes. We are told by one who knew the female mind well, that—

> "Love may sink by slow decay,
> But by sudden wrench believe not
> Hearts can thus be torn away."

A woman's pride is her greatest safeguard, and it is the point most assailable. Her pride was hurt in the first instance by the harshness of her father to her lover, and she generously clung to the latter; now, her pride fired at the neglect, and a change took place in her feelings and affections. She had scarcely time to dry her tears, to ponder over the state of her heart, to curl the ringlets in order to appear in the most becoming manner, and to place the buckle which fastened the band surrounding her taper

waist a little negligently on one side, when the major was announced, and tiffin was reported ready. Moore has made this remark :—

> "I know that in joy, just as well as in grief,
> I always find eating a monstrous relief;
> And Bob who 's in love, says he feels the same quite;
> My sighs, said he, ceased with the first glass I drank you,
> The lamb made me tranquil, the puffs made me light;
> And now that 's all over, I am pretty well, thank you."

And as far as I am individually concerned, I think the remark is founded on fact. I propose to leave our lovers here for the moment, in order to keep my convoy all together. Never was father more loved by his son than mine had been by me. The division of the property, which left me independent, and which I could nearly double by my own exertions, made me, comparatively speaking, affluent. I had as much as any man could actually want, and my labours supplied me with little luxuries; but the grief did not so easily pass, the weight upon my heart was sufficient to crush it. I knew that before long the whole affair of Mizen would get into the English papers, and so surely

did I know that some illnatured ruffian would convey it to my sister. I remember being left alone in, to me, a desert apartment, and my tracing the following lines,—the first serious effusion that ever came from my unpractised poetical pen:—

"Oh, heavens! it is an awful sight
To see the human soul take wing,"
And everlasting clouds of night
O'er life their shadowy mantles fling:
When all we bless'd must fade away,
When all we loved expires in pain,
And when the glorious light of day
To-morrow shall not bring again.

See cold consumption sap a life,
Working with unremitting zeal;
Better to feel the murderer's knife,
Than health's continued ebb to feel;—
Or worse, when madness racks the brain,
And quenches the celestial fire,
When raving frenzy lives and reigns,
And mind, and soul, and sense retire.

Oh spare, oh spare me, gracious God!
That hideous sight too often seen,
When reason quits her long abode,
And leaves us, what we erst have been—
When, grown to man's maturer age,
We sink again into the child,
And infants in our joy or rage,
Scarce know the moments, how beguiled.

In mercy too, vouchsafe to spare
  Of human minds that blighting curse,
The maniac's rave—the idiot's stare,
  The man dependant on the nurse.
Oh ! teach me in life's summer days
  To know, to feel, to do thy will,
And let me sing thy heavenly praise,
  Bless'd to the last with reason still.

Bad as was the production, they had a powerful influence upon my mind : I felt that the barrier between myself and eternity was broken down ; I saw before me a life of chance and of solitude. I knew my evil spirit would haunt and persecute to the last ; and although I looked upon Lucy as my guardian angel, yet I felt that chilling heaviness of heart which generally precedes some great and important event.

CHAPTER II.

For the present the family kept together, that is to say, for a month, at the expiration of which time the executors generally interfere, and the wide world is left open to the wanderer. Banana was lodged not far from us; he had returned to his own country considerably richer, but his mind was a million-fold more susceptible of little annoyances. Every drop of rain that fell, was in his eyes a second deluge; and the colds of winter were more piercing than the Esquimaux could experience in their most rigid season. He never walked out without clogs, even if the day was as dry as a drunkard's mouth in the morning; and with the aid of a white topping great-coat, which he

required much persuasion to wear, and a huge cotton umbrella, with a handle large enough for a shepherd's crook, he managed to venture about a quarter of a mile from his lodgings, in order to occasionally visit Jane. It was about the expiration of the month since my return that one morning Banana came to breakfast; a very unusual thing indeed, for he dearly loved the butter he bought himself, the eggs which were warranted fresh, and the bread which did not contain more than a pound of alum: as to meat at that meal, he considered it the very height of impropriety, and he disinherited a wandering Jew with whom he had made acquaintance in Java, because one day he called for a mutton-chop at breakfast.

No courier big with the fate of nations ever wore an appearance of greater consequence than did Banana on this eventful morning; he with difficulty managed to get out the usual commencement of English conversation, 'A cold day!' to my sister, and to me he scarcely deigned to utter one word. He was so completely the child of circumstance, so easily credulous, and

so delicately susceptible, that any behaviour scarcely surprised us. He had left Java in a hurry, because one of the chiefs of the neighbouring islands, to whom Banana had sent some articles of luxury, in return for the present had shipped a virgin, as the letter stated, as a remunerating gift. Even the curiosity of Banana was overcome by the shock his delicacy experienced; and in order not to meet this wonderful morsel, presented, as she was to be, on a yellow cushion, and garbed in light and almost transparent robes, he left his house, which was about one hundred miles distant from Batavia, and, without the necessary luxuries for a voyage, bundled on board the first ship, with his friend the Jew, and returned to England. From this little anecdote the reader may form some idea how difficult it was to please him, and how mightily tenacious he invariably was, when his virtue was assailed, or his character suspected. Our breakfast passed almost in silence, but towards the conclusion, Banana assumed rather a serious

air, and commenced what is called a sounding conversation. His object was discernible before he had got through the two first sentences—it was to provide a home for my sister; but, as he continued, we discovered that he was anxious to know the state of her heart, and, in short, how the business between Lucy and Mizen had terminated. He had been duly informed of the progress of love; and no man was more honourably tenacious of a woman's character than my uncle. A thunderbolt, had it rent the house from top to bottom, could not have startled me more than the sudden pronunciation of Mizen's name; I turned giddy and pale, and almost fainted with fear. Banana observed the change, for his eyes were never idle, and he said, "Then I see it is all true."

Jane immediately interfered, delicate as the subject was to her, and the explanation ten thousand times more so. She prefaced her confessions with assuring my uncle that I never had seen Mr. Mizen in my life; she then recapitulated in a modest, unassuming man-

ner, the reason why Captain Mizen was discharged, confessing unhesitatingly her love for him, for she believed with Lord Lyttelton—

> "A girl unask'd, may own a well-placed flame;
> Not loving first, but loving wrong, is shame."

The conclusion of her remarks, which were beautifully expressed, and which convinced my uncle that Mizen alone occupied her heart, was couched in these words.—"Since that period I have never heard from him, although Ruffle told me, that Captain Mizen had embarked with his old friend, Captain Murphy, at Hamburgh, in order to visit Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Russia."

"And there he will ever remain," said Banana, his eyes darting fire and fury at me. I heard, it was true, all the conversation; but I was so riveted to my seat, so overcome by surprise, that I did not venture a remark, or hazard an answer. My sister asked why her uncle had inquired.

"Because I wished to know how your heart recovered the shock," replied my uncle; "for now it is left without a protector, and, shatter-

ed perhaps by this last blow which has so recently occurred, I was anxious to ascertain if it could withstand another calamity."

"I hope," said my sister, "whatever it may please God to inflict, I can bear as a Christian should; but the subject is a painful one in the extreme. I cared not for the sneers of my *friends*, when the match was so suddenly broken off, even when the day was fixed; neither did I regard with asperity the trifling mistakes *made on purpose* by those who visited me. I had a duty to perform to myself, and I did it without shrinking. I hope, my dearest uncle, no man can reproach me with the character of a flirt or a jilt. My conduct has been, as Robert says, straightforward. I have nothing to fear from the tongues of the malignant, or the whispers of the slanderer. When the character of Captain Mizen was above suspicion, I loved him, and I consented to marry him; but when he made a rival of my own servant I was indignant, and I spurned him. Still, however, my heart would easily forgive, and I find I have not ex-

tinguished the spark I thus endeavoured to smother."

"Excellent girl!" said Banana, as he took her hand; "you have well followed your poor father's advice, and realized his expectations; but in this world we are 'born to sorrow even as the sparks fly upward.' Glad am I to find you endued with such fortitude and resignation; for the heart which is already stricken, must yet receive another shaft, and I hope, the unpleasant news I have to communicate, and which I prefer to break to you—"

"Good God! my dear uncle, what is it? speak. Has any accident happened to him? Do not keep me longer on the rack, nor torture me with delays. Tell me, tell me, what is it?"

"Your brother there might save me the pain," replied my uncle; "but yet, it had better come from me."

"My uncle! my uncle! if ever you loved me," said Jane, throwing her arms round his neck, "tell me all now, directly. I can bear

it as a woman ought to bear the greatest calamities; but I cannot bear the delay."

"Promise me then, Jane, to bear it like a woman, and not to allow the painful circumstance to break down the strong barrier of fraternal affection, or to bow you to the ground with grief and mourning."

"Oh, never! never will I so tamely yield to any woe; and poor dear Robert too! again a misfortune to you, likely to break the bonds which nature had bound us by. Poor unfortunate fellow! well might I learn from you how to bear up against worldly calamities, and yet exist."

"Here," said my uncle, as he drew from his pocket *The Times* newspaper — "Here is the account of the whole affair. I cannot find it; but it is headed Hamburgh, and—" Here the poor excellent-hearted kind Banana, who never in his life willingly inflicted a wound on any, could no longer restrain the tears which rushed from his eyes and coursed down his furrowed cheeks.

"Give it me, give it me," said Jane, as she snatched the paper from my uncle's hand, her eyes running over every line with the rapidity of lightning. She turned the leaf—"Oh, here it is, at last." She began to read in a hurried tone, "Hamburgh, February.—Our peaceful city has been the scene of one of those shameful exhibitions by which the life of a captain in the English navy has been sacrificed." Here she pursued the subject in silence, her eyes almost starting from her head, her hands trembling in every nerve, her whole frame agitated and convulsed, until she read the words "Robert Ganjam," when she gave a loud shriek and fell on the ground.

Banana had leaned his head over the mantelpiece, not daring to look at her agitation and dismay. He wept like a child, whilst I, motionless from despair, had kept my eyes fixed upon my sister. The scream brought the servant, who hastily summoned her maid, and withdrew the fainting female. Now, not a word escaped from either of us. We were left alone: the consummation of all my mis-

fortunes seemed at hand: my sister would abhor me; my uncle would spurn me; and where—oh, where could I turn to shelter myself from the storm of opprobrium which was bursting over my devoted head! Used as I was to scenes of wretchedness and misery, I was still more overcome by the sobs of my uncle, than by all the cruelties I had experienced. When a man weeps, the sorrow should be great. It is a right almost exclusive in females, whose tender frames can but ill stem the worldly torrent of affliction; but for the stronger sex to give way to tears, has something so shocking in the exhibition as to have unmanned others by the sight. I was resolved to see the statement, and taking the paper, read as follows:—

"Hamburgh, February 3rd.—Our peaceful city has been the scene of a quarrel, which was followed by one of those shameful exhibitions (my sister had omitted one line in her eagerness) by which the life of a captain in the English navy has been sacrificed. It arose from an attachment between the deceased and the survivor's sister, which had been broken off

in consequence of the misbehaviour of the former. It appears the brother followed the captain to our town, and a meeting took place near Oversloë. The duel was fought in the French manner. The captain's fire having been ineffectual, the brother coolly advanced, and, placing the pistol against the breast of his adversary, shot him dead on the spot. The murdered man was Captain Mizen, and the murderer Robert Ganjam."

The paper dropped from my hand, and I remained more like a statue than a living being. In the mean time the curiosity of the servants —those peeping, prying, paltry creatures,—was excited; and one came to remove the coffee-pot, another the tea-pot; one took a saltcellar, one a cup: the butler lingered as he brushed the crumbs from the tablecloth: he folded it with especial care, and the time seemed an hour until the disappointed intruder banged the door, and left us alone.

"My uncle—" I began; but he waved his hand as much as to command silence. At this moment the servant entered with the coal-

scuttle, and removed my uncle, who fixed his eyes upon a picture over the sideboard. In vain the persevering prying varlet brushed up the cinders, making more dirt by the operation,—in vain he poked the fire; not a word was said, and he retired unsatisfied as to his craving of curiosity. "My uncle," I began; "listen to me: the statement is false."

"False!" said he, turning hastily round, as if willing to catch at a shadow to restore me to his good opinion. "False! Robert. Only answer me this question, and you will make me a happy man. Did you, or did you not—answer on your honour as a gentleman—kill Captain Mizen?"

"I cannot answer that," I replied, "to your satisfaction; for——"

"Of course—I see it—it is all true. You murdered him in cold blood—the man who was to have been your brother-in-law—in whom the affections of your sister were centred. Had he fallen in a fair upright duel, I could have forgiven you, though God never would; but to advance upon an unarmed man, to place

a pistol to his breast, and to shoot him dead, is the act of a murderer, a coward, and a villain. Henceforth, since from your own lips I have had the confession, henceforth, Robert, avoid me,—never enter my doors, or never intrude upon my sight."

"Will you hear me, sir," I replied, "contradict the whole statement? Will you allow me to show my innocence even to you, and not interrupt me in my narrative?"

"Have I not evidence against you here?—here?" said he, pointing to the villanous newspaper. "Do you not confess having shot him in the manner described?"

"I never confessed any such thing," said I, having recovered the first shock, and being both prepared and ready to confute the statement. "If you will only listen to me, I will explain the whole affair, very much to your satisfaction.

"Satisfaction!" grunted my uncle: "I fancy that is not very likely, sir."

"But will you allow me to continue without these interruptions? or are you one of those

judges who very kindly ruin a man upon an ex-parte statement?"

"Well, go on; but don't make use of any lawyer's expressions, and then perhaps I may have patience."

For a wonder he did listen. I entered at length on the whole affair; I mentioned the conversation which had taken place the previous evening; I related the desire of the French officer to have the duel in that fashion, and I mentioned that the ball which struck Mizen was fired from the same distance that he fired, and that, so far from my advancing upon him, I fired my second shot in the air. "And, sir," said I in conclusion, "that paper has omitted to mention that Mizen aimed well at me, and wounded me," (my uncle here started back and put his hand over his mouth, expressing horror and hope by the motion of his fingers and the glow on his countenance,) "and to convince you of this," I said, "here is the wound."

I then began the necessary unbuttoning, but was instantly stopped by Banana, who would

much sooner that a man died than have his wound dressed, if any indelicate exposure was necessary in the operation.

"There—there—there, that's quite enough—wounded in the stomach of course! don't show me, I beg."

"Are you satisfied, my dear uncle, that I have done nothing outrageously disreputable?"

"Most certainly I am satisfied with your statement, and should have acted as you did, with the exception of having a Frenchman for a second; that could not be avoided in your case. The result was very unfortunate indeed, and you must expect your sister's hatred for ever."

"He was not dead when I left him, which was the day after the date of that paragraph; so that, although I confess I have little hope of his recovery, yet this I know, that when that slanderous correspondent sent his erroneous statement, Captain Mizen was not only alive, but was declared not in danger: he afterwards relapsed, and during his near approach to

death, sent his last blessing to Jane, and begged that she would forgive his follies, which had cost him his life."

"We must see your sister and explain this. I will go if she is in the drawing-room, but, if she is in her own room, we must wait, or write her the account, for we cannot enter into that sanctum sanctorum."

"I think, sir, it would be much better," I replied, "to break down some old-fashioned rules, rather than let Jane be in ignorance of the result; for now she believes her lover dead, and her brother a murderer."

"Very true, Robert, very true; but I never entered a lady's bed-room in my life."

At this fortunate crisis the maid entered, having first knocked at the door and startled my uncle, and begged that Mr. Banana would go to Miss Ganjam, who had something important to communicate. Away he went, making intelligible signs that he thought the girl had a handsome figure, and, shutting the door, left me to my own reflections, which were none of the sweetest.

"A note, sir, for you," said the eternal footman, who jumped in and out like the man in a weather-house, and who again stirred the fire, brought more coals, and swept up the cinders.

I pretended to take no notice of the scrawl, but continued reading the *Times*, having determined to baulk curiosity, by either accidentally burning the paper or cutting out the intelligence.

"Is there any answer, sir? a servant is waiting in the hall."

"A man, or a woman?" I asked.

"A woman, sir, who says she is in a great hurry."

"Tell her to walk in; I want to speak to her."

She was closely veiled, but did not appear over anxious to conceal her face; I directed the footman to shut the door before I ventured to ask if she brought the note herself. The reply was in the affirmative; and in the voice I recognised Simpson. The note was from Mary, and written without her sister's knowledge: it mentioned Lucy's approaching marriage, fixed

for next week at St. George's, and the astonishment of my little friend that I had never answered Lucy's last note, and never kept my appointment, owing to which, she had accepted Major Henderson's hand, and my hopes were crushed for ever. It is said that a man gets so used to misfortunes when they come so thickly, as shortly not to heed them, and I really believe the truth. This last destruction of hope and affluence I bore with such perfect indifference, as to strike Simpson very forcibly. I neither broke out in the voice of despair, or gave way to a flourish of tongues. I neither fainted nor wept, but preserved my coolness in the stoical manner.

"Going to be married to the major!" said I; "why, Simpson, how long ago has this taken place?"

"About three weeks ago, sir. Miss Lucy could not bear your neglect, Miss Mary says, and therefore, I suppose, in a fit of anger she took that handsome, clever soldier."

"But, Simpson, did you not give my last note to Miss Lucy? and does she not know that

my father is but lately dead, and that I could not with propriety tear myself from his bed of sickness, when I was informed that his recovery was impossible? Of course, she knows that he is dead."

"I do not think she does, sir, for Sir Jacob keeps the paper from after breakfast until about one o'clock; and besides, Mrs. Stackpole does not like her daughters to read such trash. Pray, sir, what am I to tell Miss Mary, for I am in a great hurry, and if Mrs. Stackpole knew I carried notes she would instantly discharge me; and you know service is no inheritance, and I might starve before any one else would take me, or feed me; but for you, sir, I would run a little risk."

"Or perhaps for Sir Jacob," I said with a smile; "those churches are good marks for meetings."

"I don't understand you, sir, I am sure; and I am in a great hurry, so that, if you have no answer to send, I will return immediately. I must say that I never heard of a man taking an affair of this kind with so much coolness;

but I suppose you are going to be married to the Russian princess ?"

" Russian devil !" I replied ;—" but what can I do if the day is fixed, and the girl's affections given to another ?"

" Dear me !" replied Simpson, " as if a girl who is not married might not alter her mind again if she only saw the man she first loved. I advise you to go there to-morrow about one o'clock." Saying which she walked out, and left me to make as much of her story as my poor abilities might enable me to do.

Banana came to me as Simpson made her exit. " Well, Robert," he said, " your sister is much more reconciled to you since the statement you have made, more especially as I put it as a point of honour on your part; for, after the knowledge of Mizen's behaviour, I conceive you or I were bound to revenge the insult; you had the misfortune to be the one. Still, however, your sister declares it impossible to fix her eyes upon you as she would wish to do, and she therefore leaves this house for her aunt's directly. Just wander about some-

where for an hour or two, and she will have taken her leave of the old servants, and time will do away the bad impression of the present moment."

"Misfortunes never come single," I replied; "that woman you just now saw make her exit, has brought me the pleasant news that the girl to whom I was to have been married, has, owing to my attention to a dying parent, and consequently my neglect to her, not only dismissed me as her lover, but actually engaged herself to a lobster of a soldier, and is to be married next week. She is a girl of fortune and of beauty, one to whom I am most sincerely and truly attached; and such is my vanity, or perhaps my folly, that in spite of the communication, I will not believe her so despicable as to forsake me for a fancied neglect, more especially as my duty to my parent was certainly a prior consideration, and affection ought to pardon even an indiscretion, when that indiscretion arises from an absolute duty. But I am not going to give up the affair without a struggle; and whilst Jane is busy in departing, I

will blockade the widow's door, and endeavour to get an interview with some of the household."

"That's right, Robert, she is a prize, I hear, worth contending for; and the man is a precious fool who gives up a chance, when that chance may render him happy for life. One thing I would impress upon your mind, which is, the resolution taken by your sister: do not imagine that she discards you as a brother, very far is that from the truth: she desired me to say, that whenever she addressed her God, you should not be forgotten in her prayers. Most anxiously she wishes you the comforts of a quiet conscience, and gladly would she now see you, did she not fear that the very thought of her brother being the murderer of her lover, might shock her so dreadfully, as to excite a disgust, which at this moment, owing to the explanation, does not exist."

The first intimation of the infidelity of Lucy hardly moved me to reproach or anger; it came too quickly upon the duel intelligence, and the last-mentioned affair was the stronger

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poison. As I walked at my usual rapid pace towards the house of my estranged love, numerous unpleasant ideas rushed across my mind. I was certain I had been betrayed by some one, and it was more than probable that Simpson would have told Sir Jacob of the clandestine correspondence. Again, as the Hamburgh affair was quoted from the morning papers into the second-edition retailers of news, 'the evening papers,' I knew that even if it escaped her eyes it would not escape those of Sir Jacob, who invariably began at the advertisements, and continued down to "Printed and published by John Crow," taking particular care to read aloud whatever struck his fancy. Then I busied myself about imagining how any neglect could be fixed upon me. I had expressly stated that my father was dying, and his death had been announced in the papers, and must have been seen and read by Sir Jacob, and, if he saw it, Mrs. Stackpole did also. Whilst I was running over these untoward events, which certainly came rather thick upon me, and as I got near the garden-wall, intending to make myself as

little conspicuous as possible, a brewer's dray ran against a hackney-coach, which was, as usual, left without its driver on the stand, the horses having their heads comfortably inclosed in large sacks, and blind to everything but their food. The waterman was the first to give tongue when the neglect of the drayman occurred, and as his language was not very refined, the whip of a stout, able-bodied man soon fell upon his shoulders, accompanied with a gentle remonstrance, as to 'minding one's own business.' The noise and tumult occasioned by this gross assault soon dislodged the hackney-coach drivers from their beer and pipes, and they turned out to witness the affray. As the coach was upset, the glasses broken, and the blind horses rather in jeopardy, the passers by lent a willing hand to extricate the poor jarvey from its perilous situation; and I amongst the rest, with all the disposition to do a kind action, put my shoulder to the wheel. A gentleman next to me called out, "Now, my lads, lift all together—one—two—three—lift!" and the jarvey was reinstated in all the dignity

of its 'stand:' when, unfortunately, the commanding officer, who turned to me to make some remarks, started back some two or three paces as he ejaculated, 'Mr. Ganjam!' It was Sir Jacob! Pleasant enough, thought I, to be caught almost on the premises, by the veriest marplot in the world. We interchanged, however, some few observations, from which it was evident enough, that the duel affair was known, and a marked reserve the consequence: the baronet seizing the first opportunity of withdrawing, and taking the road to the house, quickened his pace, as he gained a greater distance.

This was like an ambush having been discovered, and the imprudent officer keeping his men to be butchered on the spot. I ought instantly to have given up all hope for that day, but I was too impatient to see, to hear, and to explain. I therefore, not unobserved by Sir Jacob, increased my pace towards the garden-gate, and got there, certainly, before my approach could have been heralded by the baronet. No letter was under the gate. I tried the handle—door locked; I clambered, in spite

of the observation of the workmen, and at the risk of running a spike into my neck; no Lucy —no Mary—no Simpson, were visible. I enacted sentinel, and continued to pace up and down before the gate, until at last I heard footsteps. Quite overjoyed at my patience being thus rewarded, and knowing it was the hour the girls were turned out to 'air,' I imprudently placed a note under the gate; I watched the corner of the paper, still visible; I heard the footsteps approach; I saw the note lifted; I waited to throw myself into the arms of my still affectionate Lucy when the door opened, and I rushed—not exactly into the welcome embrace of Mrs. Stackpole: she started back, calling out for assistance, and that the murderer was about to take vengeance on her. I disengaged myself instantly, and scarcely had I recrossed the gateway than the door was shut in my face, and a hellish laugh followed, in which I fancied I could distinguish the intonations of Lucy, in spite of the hoarse chuckle of Sir Jacob, the scream of Mrs. Stackpole, and the shrill treble of the younger fry. Few could

bear this and utter no reproaches. To me, misfortune was familiar; I saw at once all my hopes dashed to the earth, and without murmuring one curse at the steady opposition of the goddess, I returned home, neither broken-hearted nor in full resolution to commit suicide. I felt I was alone in the world; the only man on whom I could at all reckon was my uncle Banana, but his freaks and follies, his easy credit of any passing rumour, convinced me that no positive reliance was to be placed on him; still he was my friend and my nearest relative, with the exception of my sister. However, I had money, and when a man is in possession of that talisman he has nothing to fear, even from the malice of the world.

I was resolved to see Lucy once more, and I was, and am a determined person whenever I take such resolutions. To see her at her house was impossible, but to see her for the last time as Lucy Stackpole, and for the first as Mrs. Henderson, was very probable. Accordingly, on the day fixed for the marriage, I placed myself in one of the pews near the

altar, which possessed a convenient pillar, and there, concealed from public curiosity, I awaited the termination of my hopes. A pair or two of honest tinkers and tailors were turned off in couples, the ceremony being judiciously shortened, for the humble are imagined to live as comfortably as such animals can, without the example of Isaac and Rebecca. They appeared, poor devils! happy for the moment, and I verily believe, they looked forward to about one dozen children, all half starving, as a proof of their conjugal felicity. Then came a preparation for a greater show; the mob were ejected and the doors were closed: some dozens of women bedizened in blonde, and some score of men in blue coats and white gloves, distributed themselves in various parts of the church. The portly and jocund countenance of the Bishop of C. was exhibited under a mask of gravity. A slim and elegant man led in the beautiful figure of a woman, her face was concealed under a rich Brussels veil, and she could not and did not conceal the agitation of her mind, or the apparent horror of her situation: by her

side was another elegant creature, whose beauty was not clouded by the flimsiness of lace. At first I did not imagine the couple to be the objects of my search, but in closely examining the company, I saw Sir Jacob in all his glory, I saw Mrs. Stackpole in all her tawdriness, and I espied the jocund and merry countenance of Mary. This then, thought I, is the consummation of experience over hope.

The ceremony proceeded according to all rules of decorum and of the service. I endeavoured to catch Lucy's answer when the question was asked if she would "have this man to be her husband," but it was inaudible. I heard the bishop proclaim them man and wife, without fainting or any hysterical buffoonery. I saw the late Lucy Stackpole invested with all the dignity of the Hendersons, and I was an eyewitness to the consummate coolness with which a girl, who was outwardly the emblem of innocence, could give her hand to one, whilst certainly, until the last fortnight, her heart was another's. This was a masterpiece of performance; it imitated nature so closely that it

appeared quite natural. No deep-toned 'amen!' at least from my lips, followed even the blessing. I watched the frustration of all my chances with a dry and a clear eye. I was wound up for anything, and I only felt as if I could stab—stab—ay, to the very heart, both the fickle, faithless girl, and the more successful lover. They returned to eat and drink in their new state; to be the show of the moment, and then as if ashamed that such an act had been committed and not properly appreciated, the postilions who drove the new travelling carriage from the door, were decked with favours, that all the world might know, what an old lord once remarked, 'The trap was down, and another fool caught.' Away they went, at rapid speed, to a place belonging to the major's uncle; and as they passed the corner where I had posted myself, my eye caught that of the bride, and I looked, I hope, as if I wished her all the happiness she could experience in her novel situation—I never saw them afterwards.

CHAPTER III.

Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks.

SHAKSPEARE.

THEY say it is lucky to meet the eye of a bride or a king; we shall see what reliance is to be placed on these old sayings. A Russian will post himself for hours at the portal of the palace to see the emperor on his return. He feels not the chilled air, which pierces even the thick shube of the affluent, or the dirty sheepskin of the peasant. There will he stand until his emperor passes, when he will doff his cap and cross himself, return to his hut, bow to the golden-covered god in the corner, and be sure of fortune's favour.

I had returned home, not sobbing, nor sighing, but boiling with rage, indignation, and hatred. That Jane would shortly be restored to reason I never doubted, and I thought that my absence might tend more to relieve her mind than the knowledge that I was in a state of hopeless inactivity. I seized the newspaper, and there saw in an advertisement that a steam-boat was to go the following morning to Antwerp. In an instant I resolved *to cut and run*, and, calling my servant, I mentioned my determination of withdrawing myself and discharging him. My portmanteaus were soon ready, and at ten o'clock the next morning the paddles were in motion, and the steam-boat was winding her way through the innumerable barges and colliers which throng the river Thames. The day was excessively fine, and the passengers seemed well employed in watching the different objects they passed. It is true I saw the domes of Greenwich, the arsenals of Deptford and Woolwich, but so perfectly was I absorbed in my own reflections, that had I been asked to decide if that beautiful hospital for the veteran

preservers of England had been built of stone or brick I certainly could not have answered the question.

It is very strange how sailors forget their griefs when they are once afloat; the very instant the vessel begins to pitch she pitches out a portion of their remembrances, and before twenty-four hours have elapsed your real thorough-bred seaman has quietly subsided into the automaton being he is, and his occupations, which the wind and the sea keep pretty active, drive out that heaviness of thought only properly appreciated by the idle and the ignorant. Before we had cleared the Thames the dinner was announced, and we sat down all with wonderfully fine appetites, the result of fresh air and a change of scene. We had amongst the fifteen passengers one rather pretty girl, of about eighteen, who, under the protection of her father, was about to visit foreign parts. She had evidently never read more than the title-page of life, which is comprised in one's own native place, and never turned over the parti-coloured leaves which swell the work into so

many volumes. She was natural, awkward, and foolish, at least this was my first impression, and her father, who paid her great attention, was a short badger-headed booby, with a frizzled grey wig, long whites, and short gaiters. Having had every dish placed before him, and having swallowed enough to have rendered a boa-constrictor languid, this worthy representation of City gluttony relaxed his fierce countenance into kind condescension, and allowed us to understand that he was the possessor of wealth which he had accumulated from holding one or two monopolies during the last war; he took the tide, he said, as it began to rise, and he floated up to the very head of the harbour with a flowing stream. By degrees the different passengers left the table, some a little depressed in spirits from an awkward sensation arising from the increased motion, some cold with sickness and forthcoming apprehension, some eager to catch a view of Sheerness, and some fearful of temptation and of overstepping the boundary of half a pint of fiery fluid called sherry. We

were alone—that is, the father, the daughter, and myself. Anxious as I was to drown care, even by the means of hot boiling port, and willing to seek any amusement to drive me from myself, I offered my bottle to the merchant, and we soon became very loquacious and very intimate.

"Bad times these, Sir," he began, "for speculations—all going to the dogs, Sir, ay?—shipping interest ruined—public mind unhinged—up one minute and down the next, like buckets in a well; nothing new now but free blacks and ten-pound voters; as flat as ditch-water in clerks all the city—asleep over the counters—Jews driven to sell their own old clothes; and as for the Gazette, it's occupied for a month to come between making knights and announcing bankruptcies. Very bad times, sir, ay?—very bad indeed, Sir, ay?"

"Rather so," I replied; "but, as you gentlemen and medical men say, when things are at their worst they must mend, so that you have only to look forward to better times. We have been worse than we are a dozen

times before, and always came right again; and so we shall now."

"Yes, Sir, no doubt, when the church is down, the peers are down, the funds are down, the rich are down, and nothing up but the radicals and the gallows, then we may mend a little. Talk of wrecks and ruins, it's nothing to the distress in the city, Sir."

I muttered something about better times, and the peace of Europe.

"Peace of the devil!" ejaculated the merchant rather loudly. "O for the good old days of peace and prosperity, when every boy and girl in a family became a record for life of the father's gain. Why, look there, Sir," said he, pointing to his daughter,—"I called her Virginia, because she was born the very day I made a good hit by a cargo of tobacco. I had expected another vessel with rice, but the weed came first, and I never looks at my daughter without thinking of America."

"And if the rice ship had arrived first," I replied, "I suppose you would have called your pretty daughter Louisiana, or Georgia?"

"Very good thought that, Sir, ay; but I don't like the way you pronounced that first name. Virginia, or, as I call her, Jenny, is as dear a girl as ever was born, and she 'll have a better fortune than half your honourables, or your Lady Bettys and Sarahs, poor fag-ends of stale nobility, Sir. Give me your healthy lass, with rosy cheeks and a good purse; ay, Jenny, that 's the tune, isn't it? I never liked your plated-glass in the shop window, while the till was empty; all outside show, like the Lord Mayor's carriage.

"Pray, sir," said I, "do you make any stay at Antwerp?"

"Can't say indeed — depends upon Jenny there; we are out for three months; heard a good deal about a large church with a funny spire—intend to see both outside and in: fine town Antwerp.—What are you going to do?"

"I may stay a month, or a year; my time is my own, and I am abroad for my own pleasure."

"What," replied my friend, "no limit for time or credit! a private gentleman on his own fortune. I 've saved a pretty large one — my

only daughter this, all alone in the world now with the exception of her, but still continue the business—can't give up old employments; like my ledger; little said is soon mended—got on by little and little—small potatoes fill a sack: thank God am rich—would not call the king my grandfather."

As we had finished our second bottle of Day and Martin, and as some of the passengers on deck were talking about Margate, we left the cabin, and I assisted Virginia on deck. Hitherto she had kept a guarded silence, but now she cheerfully asked several questions relative to the places we passed, and the awkward behaviour seemed to give way to a slight degree of boldness. She was not, as I have said, handsome, but there was a sharpness about her features, and a quickness in her eye, which, when she became animated, changed the natural heaviness of her manner. She was about eighteen, and had evidently abundantly stored her mind with numerous yearly productions dignified by the name of novels. It was evident she had a romantic turn, and she talked of the

dangers of the sea with a kind of rapture, finishing by a declaration, "That nothing would make her happier than witnessing a gale of wind, or a tempest, (for landsmen all make a distinction upon this head,) and really to behold the sea running mountains high."

"For that, Miss Virginia," I replied, "I think you have as good a chance of being gratified as the most sanguine could expect. I have been long at sea, and learned to read the heavens, and if my early education has not been in vain, that red fiery setting sun is no favourable prognostic as to the calm we now enjoy."

"And you have been at sea?" said Virginia, when her father had left us; "how delightful! Now do tell me, sir," she continued, with the most amiable simplicity, "is it true that there are some birds which foretell a tempest?"

"Not exactly," I replied: "upon the same principle, and for the same reason, that swallows fly low before rain falls, so do birds which sailors call Mother Cary's chickens, appear to

skim the sea before a gale. Our best signs are in the skies. Look," said I, "at that small light cloud, how it is separating and blowing out, like the loose hair of a woman's head; sailors designate that by the name of mares' tails, and it is a proof that already aloft the wind has begun, and has blown the cloud into that curious shape. Again, observe how above the one I pointed out the small clouds form like oyster-shells placed one over the other; sailors say,

> 'Mackerels' scales, and mares' tails,
> Make lofty ships to carry low sails.'

Had this been far advanced in the winter the gale would be preceded by a fog, but at this season of the year, so near the equinox, the signs above are written in a legible hand, and before we get into the Scheldt, we shall see if steam can beat the wind."

"I have heard," she said, "that fish are supposed to indicate the approach of bad weather; is that true?"

"No," I replied; "the porpoise is the only fish that has ever been supposed to know which

way the wind blows, but there is no truth in it. Crows will foretell the approach of a hard winter in northern climates, but sailors always look at a setting or a rising sun, and judge from the clouds aloft how the wind will come. See how beautifully it sinks now, and how all the clouds are slightly tinged with a golden edge—and now it is down, observe how far and wide the fiery blaze of light seems to have expanded itself. Before an hour is past, mark if I am not a true prophet."

"You really frighten me with your apprehensions; and yet," continued Virginia, "I can gain courage by looking at you, for you seem to regard these omens with as much coolness as if danger was not the consequence of the gale."

"It would ill become me," I replied, "to be frightened by appearances; 'sufficient for the day be the evil thereof:' no man of sense is scared by what has not come; the cool and collected man will guard against danger, but no one will show an alarm until it is near at hand. We may yet escape without a squall,

and I should not like to be the subject of your raillery when we land at Antwerp; you might ridicule me as a false prophet. But here is the steward to summon you to tea."

"I never take it," she replied; "and besides, I would not leave this beautiful scene. No, father," said Virginia, as the old gentleman beckoned to her to descend, "I would rather remain here and watch the evening, it is so beautiful, and looks so fierce and fiery."

"Ah!" said the man at the wheel, who turned his eye in a knowing manner to where the sun had been, "fierce and fiery enough; we shall have plenty of draught from that furnace: by Jemini it will come on after dark hard enough to blow the teeth down your throat."

"Did you overhear that?" said I to Virginia. "That fellow is not a landsman taught only to steer a boat; he is an old hand, and seems to grow young upon the prospect of the breeze. Have you secured a sleeping-place? because, if you have, the sooner you get to sleep the better; it may keep off the sickness for some time."

"If you are tired of my company I will go to my father, but to bed I certainly do not go until I have seen a gale of wind; that is, if there is to be one this night."

"I warned you for your own comfort; mine would have been less had you accepted the advice. The longer you stay the better I shall be pleased; and I know not of any greater satisfaction than becoming your protector should any danger arise." Virginia looked at me with an eye of tenderness, and then observed that she thought the vessel began to move. "You are right: before the wind comes the sea will get higher."

It was now fast verging towards night; the clouds formed heavily upon the horizon, whilst aloft the scud began to fly with some rapidity. The passengers who had felt the increased motion of the vessel began to take seats near the sides of the boat; and the old gentleman, who was as cheerful as wine could make him, said he was resolved to be a sailor that evening, and have a glass of grog. He sat down upon the same bench as ourselves,

and whistled a kind of defiance at the black cloud.

"I say, master," said the old tar at the wheel, "you need not whistle for it, you will have it soon enough, long before you get that glass of grog you were talking about."

"What does that ill-looking fellow mean?" retorted the old gentleman. "Does he fancy that I am whistling for the wind?"

"It is a common superstition," I replied, "amongst seamen, to believe that any man whistling is likely to increase the wind."

"Ah! here it comes, sure enough," cried the old tar; "you have called it to some purpose."

We turned our eyes towards the horizon, which had become suddenly very dark, whilst a light and variable flaw of wind had already reached the vessel. At this moment the steward brought up the glass of grog, and placed it on the flat top of the skylight belonging to the ladies' cabin, the merchant keeping his eyes steadily fixed upon the forthcoming storm. We had not long to wait. The variable wind soon became steady from the south-west, a few

drops of rain heralded the tempest, and whilst the old tar was chuckling at the fright exhibited by the merchant, the whole force of the wind broke upon the steam-boat, and checked its progress through the water. As the old gentleman placed both hands upon his hat, and leaned forward to bow his head to the squall, the jolly tar reached the glass, and drinking the contents in a trice, upset the empty vessel, which rolling off the skylight, smashed into a thousand pieces.

"Ill wind which blows no one any good," he exclaimed. "You see the glass-blower likes this. Blow my eye, how it is coming on!"

Virginia, when the first gust of wind came, in the moment of her fear clasped my hand. I held her's, and reassured her.

"It was nothing," I said; "but the rain would deluge her, and she had better go below."

"Not I, indeed," she replied. "I have often wished for this, and now I will have it out. My poor father had better retire down stairs, for if he catches cold he will suffer

much; but for me I am young, and I am sure you will give me all the assistance I may require."

I squeezed her hand gently, and she understood the silent assent. In the mean time the old merchant had crawled to the weather-side, for the boat could not make head against the fierce squall, and had fallen off, making her starboard side the weather side. The motion increased rapidly; a general cry of "Steward! steward!" was to be heard above the wind; and from the chilling feel of indifference, only known in sea-sickness, the danger arising from the elements was perfectly disregarded, and the passengers only groaned, and wished themselves either dead or drowning. The old gentleman, who had creept as far forward as the steps which lead from the poop to the deck, was soon in no better plight.

"I say," began a smoke-*Jack*, a fellow who had been long enough from Whitechapel to laugh at Neptune's exertion in regard to turning his stomach, and who could, after a fashion, steer the boat—"I say, sir, you

mustn't be sick to windward; it's all a flying over the other people. You had better mizzle."

"Mizzle!" grunted the poor fellow, "no, it rains. Oh! I'm so sick. Oh!"

"You must walk your chalks, sir, you must indeed. You'd better go below. Shall I lend you a hand, sir?"

"No, no," replied the merchant, his head sunk between his hands. "No, much obliged; but, never borrow, never lend—Short accounts long friends. Oh!"

"It's no use chaffing, sir, you must pocket your pumps, and cut your stick."

"Who has pocketed the pumps?" said the frightened man, "or cut the stick? Dear me! Oh! I'm very sick. Good God! The pumps gone—and the—oh!"

At this time the steward and the Whitechapel hero shouldered the sick man, and with much care and attention conducted him in his cabin, where he was safely lodged, and left to groan, quite unconscious that he had a daughter, and that she was on deck.

The gale had now increased seriously; the

paddles revolved in the water without propelling the boat in the least: ahead the lightning flashed, whilst the rain fell in torrents, and the wind whistled over the vessel with surprising force. Virginia still remained with her fearless countenance watching the storm, whilst a flash of animation played over her features. I thought she looked beautiful. She was drenched with the rain, in spite of the cloaks in which I enveloped her. Still she remained on deck, and as each increasing gust of wind came, she seemed to enjoy rather than to fear its force. The captain, to whom I addressed myself, appeared quite bewildered, and when I added, "This is a pretty sharp business," he forgot the restraint so necessary to be used by all commanders during the hour of peril, and betrayed his fears, by saying in a hurried tone, "And we shall be lucky if we get out of it."

Then it was that Virginia showed all the woman of her constitution. She clasped my hands, and in a manner so violent as even to startle me—

"Tell me, I say, and truly, is there any danger? and what can be done for my father?

it was at my request he came, I alone am to blame for having forced him unwillingly to leave his occupations. Tell me, sir, I implore you, the truth."

"The truth is, Virginia, that the captain knows nothing about his business. At present there is no danger. We may be delayed; we may be even blown back again; we may roll heavily, or pitch worse; but at this moment there is not the slightest danger, I assure you."

"Danger be d——d!" said the old tar, who had stood at the wheel, and who looked like a man just arisen from the ocean. "She rises to it like a duck, and pitches to it as easily as boys on a seesaw. I think, ma'am," said the Caliban, "you have danger enough in getting wet through from the rain, without being alarmed about nothing."

"Well," she said, "I will make my mind up to bear it all; but I will not go downstairs."

The gale had now settled into one of those beautiful specimens of Channel exhibitions so well known to those who have the misfortune to be fishermen. The wind positively roared;

the rain continued to fall, the fog to increase, the sea to rise. The only use of the engine was to keep her bow to the sea, over which she rose easily, and, as seamen express it, behaved uncommonly well, shipping very few seas, and those of no magnitude. By degrees the fog began to clear, and the moon became visible at intervals. Then it was that I first felt an admiration for Virginia, to which I was before a stranger. I saw her enveloped in my cloak, her hair hanging down dishevelled from under her bonnet, her face drenched; and yet, in the midst of this tempest, her eye was fixed with a placid admiration on the moon, and the magnificent scene by which we were surrounded. The clouds flew with unusual velocity, and no sooner was the orb of night shrouded in darkness, than it appeared again, as if sailing through the vapour by which it was occasionally concealed. The reeling vessel, kept up to the wind by means of the paddles, received each sea on her bow, which, bursting over the paddle-box, was distributed to all on deck in uncomfortable proportions. Between the gusts of winds, the whistling of the squalls, the roar of the sea,

arose the enfeebled cry of the sick, who felt not either the rain or the wind, but, lost in the giddiness of sickness, lay sprawling about the deck. Virginia had escaped the calamities of indisposition, and her heart was fortified against fear. She seemed to borrow her courage from me; for she fixed her eyes occasionally upon me, as if to read my inmost thoughts, and then, as if satisfied that I was not apprehensive of any danger, she would turn her eyes upon the moon, and watch the rapid progress of the clouds. The tide, which had hitherto been from the same direction as the wind, now changed, and produced a cross-sea, which occasioned the boat to labour seriously. She rolled heavily to windward, and shipped one or two rather awkward seas. As the captain stood by me, I recommended him to set his close-reefed foresail, to carry the sheet well aft, and to hoist the sail sufficiently high to allow the wind to have full effect. The old sailor, who had refused to leave the wheel, called out:

"That 's all right. We must steady her a little, or she will roll the funnel overboard, and

then we shall soon roast the engineer in spite of the water."

The captain was averse, however, to risk the security of his foremast, which he imagined would have been blown over the side had he set his sail. In vain, both the rough old tar and myself urged him to take this requisite precaution. He was deaf to all arguments: he positively refused to have any sail set in such a breeze. The sea increased every minute, and the wind, as the vessel topped a wave, seemed to roar with a louder moan. After staggering some time, like a drunken man, the vessel labouring heavily, a sea, which came bellowing and curling onwards, struck, as the vessel fell off a little, full upon the starboard paddle-box; it sent it into a hundred pieces with a tremendous crash. The shake the vessel experienced seemed to animate the sick; a shriek arose from all quarters of the vessel at once, and was followed by the warning voice of the old sailor.

"That 's done for us to windward," said he. "Another such a crack, and we shall have the engineer floating on deck."

Below was confusion worse confounded.

Some one roared out that the pumps should be used. The merchant, who was sensible of the unusual noise, responded,

"It 's no use—some one has pocketed them, and cut the stick. Oh!"

Virginia turned to me. Her face was pale and frightened. I took her hand and pressed it. She said not a word; but there was an imploring look which quite overcame me.

"Jump forward," I said to the old sailor; "close reef the foresail, and up with it directly. Two or three more such seas as that, and we shall not see Antwerp this trip."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied the old man-of-war's man, lashing the helm, and in one moment skipping forward as if he were on dry land. The captain said not a word, but looked frightened. Some few of the men who had seen a gale before now, were fully aware of the propriety of the measure, and in much less time than I had expected, the sail was prepared; but when the wind first took it, (for although I had warned the old tar to have the sheet roused well aft before they began to hoist the gaff, away flew the sail over to leeward,) the sheet not being sufficient taught

it banged about with fearful violence: this frightened the passengers more than the real danger. Unused to the sound, and uninformed of the reason, they heard the sail flapping, they felt the vessel shaking, and their ear caught the sound of half-a-dozen voices all giving commands at once, in the midst of which was the captain, who had recovered himself a little, and was lending a hand at the very work he disapproved; but no sooner was the sail set, than the vessel inclined properly to leeward, the rolling was stopped, and she rode comfortably over the sea without shipping them. As the old sailor came aft, I called the steward and told him to give the veteran a stiff glass, which he swallowed with very considerable delight, and giving a kind of hah! as if getting rid of all the breath he had in his body, he remarked,

"Now it may blow great guns and small arms, for if it comes hard enough to blow the devil's horns off his head, we shall be steady and comfortable, with lots of sea-room, and as pretty a craft as ever dipped her bows in the water."

"You are not one of these fresh-water sailors," said I; "many is the breeze you have seen, I am sure; you must have been in a man-of-war before now?"

"Ah! man-of-war, to be sure I have: I have sailed in every craft from a cutter to a three-decker, and from a collier to an Indiaman."

"Were you ever in a packet?" I continued, willing to draw the attention of Virginia, and make her believe we were in no danger.

"A packet? yes, I believe I was too, and a mighty pretty packet we made of it. We had sailed from Barbadoes;—ah! let me see, 'twas on a Friday though, I remember that, in 1814, and as we were making a fine passage enough of it, and had got as far home as the Western Islands, out comes a privateer-brig, ranges up alongside like a gallant chap as he was, slaps his broadside into us, and walks us off quietly;—and, Lord bless me! such a sight as we had that day, with a young lady as was aboard—her husband was killed."

"Stop, stop, my lad," said I; "was your captain a Scotchman, and was the lady's name Montague?"

"Ay, ay, you 've said it, sir. Why, bless us, you were not on board surely?"

Virginia's curiosity was now wonderfully excited, and when I mentioned that I was a passenger in the packet, she implored me to tell her the anecdote: but I left it in the better hands of the old sailor, who seemed overjoyed to have an audience for one of his yarns, and as Virginia declared he should have another glass, he told the whole circumstance with some few additions. It appeared that he was recaptured in the packet, out of which I had been removed, and that he had afterwards served in the Saturn in India. But it was in vain he asked me who I was, and my name; I was resolved to keep my early life a secret from Virginia, for I felt that all my misfortunes originated with my first false step, and I was more particularly anxious to make an impression on Virginia's mind, which I already hoped would end in a manner calculated to make me forget some of my grievances.

After sunrise the wind considerably abated, and the change of the tide diminished the height of the sea. The starboard paddle had

been saved by the box, and we were enabled to make some way towards our port. Virginia, who so gallantly faced the night, would not in her forlorn appearance face the day, and having ascertained that her father was well and asleep, she retired to the ladies' cabin, and I, now certain that no more misfortunes were about to be heaped upon us, gladly rolled into a vacant berth, and soon was slumbering in forgetfulness.

It was four o'clock in the evening before we began to smooth the water, in consequence of our vicinity to the land; by seven we were off Flushing, and having taken a pilot on board, proceeded a few miles up the river, when the darkness rendered it requisite to anchor; for in that broad stream there are innumerable shoals, and Dutchmen, although very brave fellows, have a wonderful propensity for smoking, drinking, and sleeping. The pilot therefore declared it unsafe to go on, the anchor was let go, and the broad-sterned hero was to be seen kicking his heels on the taffrail, with a long yard of white baked clay in his mouth, and a comfortable glass by his side: he seemed a wonderfully taciturn man, and I

could not help laughing at his cautious civility, when, just as he was preparing to bid good-night to the world, the old merchant, who had now become reinvigorated with more wine, and who had laughed away the care which settled the night before upon him, insisted upon the silent Dutchman entering into a long detail as to the attack on Flushing, and then endeavoured to extract some mercantile information in regard to the present aspect of affairs — the toll of the Scheldt, the loyalty of the Dutch, and the resources of the Belgians. In vain did the pilot stretch himself out for a snoose, the merchant was inexorable, until fairly worn out by hope deferred, the pilot quietly took up his cloak, and walking forward dived into the fore-peak, and left the vessel to the care of any one inclined to be burthened with the charge. At daylight we were again under way, and passed the Dutch fleet, all lying in line, with jury topmasts, and having their van and rear well protected by gun-boats. The low shores of the Scheldt do not afford any very striking objects, and I think I never went up any river less interesting.

The Belgian fleet consists of two ten-gun brigs and four gun-boats—a most tremendous force for so great a king; they are moored near the Belgian side of the river, and from their mast-heads may plainly perceive the untractable Dutchman, with his horizontal tricolor, sweeping the river. They boarded us with all the pomp and dignity of a great people, but their officer, if such he could be called, was but a poor example of their discipline; and the men who are kept, or ought to be, clean for harbour duty, were a disgrace to a Portuguese privateer. This ceremony concluded, and a Belgian pilot taken, we wended our way to Antwerp, the merchant excessively amused at the curious build of the Dutch vessels, and making his short remarks to every one who would listen to them, whilst Virginia lent a willing ear as I pointed out the different scenes of operations during the war. I must confess that when we touched the pier I felt an uncomfortable reluctance at leaving the boat, and I thought that now I might be estranged from her, to whom I had become somehow very much attached.

CHAPTER IV.

"We are all at a wonderful distance from home;
One hundred and fifty long miles are we come."

Bath Guide.

No sooner was the steam-boat alongside the pier, than numerous officers of the customs came on deck, and began to examine the baggage of the passengers—a laudable example to other countries, and which, if followed, would conduce much to the comfort of all travellers, who thus might take a portmanteau on shore with them, and leave the rest of their baggage to be examined at leisure. Mine was visited one of the first, but I lingered in order to ascertain the name of Virginia, for, beyond the Christian designation, I had never inquired.

At last I saw the old gentleman bustling about a variety of boxes, band-boxes, work-boxes, writing-desks, and carpet-bags, and rather an elderly personage assisted him in the unlocking, &c.; this was his servant, and he seemed quite worthy of his master. I do not know that I have any particular dislike to a name: certainly, Smith is rather common; Brown is by no means rare, and Johnson, Thomson, Dickson, and Jackson, one may meet in every stage-coach in England. I would gladly have found my Virginia of one of those numerous tribes, for I could have borne up against the infliction of a father-in-law with so common an appellation, but heavens protect me! I thought I should have fainted when I saw on a large card, nailed upon every one of the above-named articles, in characters legible half-way down the Scheldt, "Lucius Firkins, passenger, Hotel d'Angleterre, Antwerp." It reminded me of Johnson's paper in the Rambler, upon the folly of giving grand names to menial servants. "Clarissa, empty the ash-tub—Dorinda, polish the grates—and do you, Stella, bring some coals,"

might sound ridiculous to the most musical ears, but nothing could exceed in ridicule, in my imagination, the names of Lucius and Virginia Firkins; the one a general merchant, and the other his blessed daughter. I felt my love, like Acre's valour, gently oozing out at my finger-ends, and I do not know but that I should have gone to the Grand Laboureur in the Place de Mer, had not Virginia, who had bedizened herself out, in the first place to smuggle a new dress, and in the next to strike the Antwerpers with astonishment, gently touched my shoulder, and in the sweetest voice asked me if I intended to go to the same hotel as they did. I pretended a certain delight at the proposition, and having left the servant to find his way with the accumulation of boxes, I placed my own portmanteau on the back of a porter, and telling him to walk forward, in order that he might show the way, and that I might not lose sight of my worldly goods, we got safe to the Hôtel d'Angleterre. Mr. Lucius Firkins and the lovely Virginia were provided with suitable rooms, and I was likewise lodged

much to my satisfaction. Lucius never spoke a word from the time he landed until he got housed, when he ejaculated—

"Curse upon the fools! no pavement to walk upon; cuts one's shoes to pieces; tired already; ankles twisted; stones all the wrong sides upwards; rum language; devil of an inn; thank God, out of that steam-boat; too many streets in this town, all turns and twists, like a Swedish broom."

A *valet de place* having been engaged, we sallied out, Firkins carrying a large cotton umbrella, although it was as clear a day as ever shone out of the heavens, in one hand, and flourishing a coloured silk handkerchief from the other. We directed our march towards the cathedral, before the door of which Lucius stopped; and leaning with his hands behind him on the umbrella, which formed a prop for his weight, he made his remarks out loud for the benefit of the bystanders.

"Cursed fools," he began, "to waste so much time and stone in such a church; what 's the use of cutting and carving so many figures?

—heard of the confusion of tongues—suppose it happened here, from the language and the height of this church."

"We are going to the top," interrupted Virginia, "to see the view."

"Indeed," replied Lucius, "then you may go without me; zooks! you will be working up hill, like a rogue on the tread-mill. Well, well, outside very fine, no doubt: let's look in." His astonishment broke forth again when he entered the cathedral, and saw nothing but long whitewashed walls, as he called the aisles of the church. The organ looked too small; the altar too large; and as for the pictures, although by the best masters, he condemned them *in toto;* more especially the one representing the descent from the cross.

"Mighty fine colouring, no doubt; who ever saw a dead man exhibiting such muscle? seen dozens on coroners' inquests, all smooth and quiet; looks more like a live boxer than a dead man. There's a horse—head long enough for a lawyer; women all too small; animals all too large."

In this manner he continued his remarks, until he came to the line of confessional boxes, which upon observing, he walked directly to the other side of the church, where he found another row.

"Very odd," said he, "in a church too—couldn't believe such a thing—foreigners strange people. Here, guide, I say." And then mysteriously pointing to the boxes, gave a knowing wink. "They are de places for de confessional, where de people go who want to"—"Yes, yes, I understand; odd people, odd people: what 's this?"

"This," said Virginia, "is a pulpit."

"A pulpit," resumed Lucius, "and stuck up here out of the way. Why it 's all cut out of oak, here are birds and beasts by thousands; zounds! it would be a good speculation to buy it, and break it up, and sell the figures for Dutch toys, ay Jemmy?"

In this manner did Lucius Firkins pass judgment upon one of the finest specimens of workmanship in the world; and so little impression did the whole of this magnificent

cathedral make upon his ignorant mind, that when he was about to leave us to mount to the summit, he said, "Grievously disappointed; like St. Pancras much better; nice pews, place filled up, no confessional boxes, all clean and decent;—looks like an empty store-house."

In the middle of this last remark, the large doors were opened, and a man bearing a cross entered, followed by three priests; then came about ten boys bearing candles, who preceded a coffin, the rear being composed of divers people of both sexes. No sooner had the priests crossed the threshold than the organ began its solemn peal, and the voices of choristers sounded in sweet harmony. Lucius stood like one transfixed; and Virginia's eyes sparkled with increased animation. The guide knelt down and crossed himself. The coffin was rested upon trestles; long wax-candles were lighted, and six placed round the corpse; one being at the head and foot, and two on each side. The mourners were accommodated with chairs, and in an instant the church was no longer the empty space it had been designated. The

priests during the placing of the body had retired to the *sacristie*, and now returned dressed in their splendid robes. The service began; and never were converts to a religion more struck with awe and amazement than two of the visiters in the cathedral. When the organ's solemn notes resounded through the aisles—when the human voices in strictest harmony aided the swell of the deep-toned music, then it was that idle curiosity was silenced; and the mind, elevated by the appeal to heaven, felt awfully the presence of our Maker; nay, the lips of censure were converted to those of praises and thanksgiving.

Such is the power of music upon the ear, and religious adoration on the eye, that the man, conversant with the weakness of the savage mind, ceases to wonder that the Catholic church is more successful in making converts than the Protestant's. Who is there of cultivated understanding, that when, in the great cathedrals dedicated to God, that awful music swells through the church, and the priest elevates the Host, whilst all around him, awed

into insignificancy, dare not to lift their eyes, but in solemn silence bow the knee of adoration, — who is there, that does not feel at that moment a thrill of devotion? and who is there so presumptuous to look upon that supposed presence of the Saviour? However much we may despise what churchmen call the trickery of the Catholics, yet I defy any man to leave their cathedrals without feeling a glow of religious veneration.

The service over, the corpse removed, the chairs replaced; Lucius took his departure to the hotel, and Virginia and myself mounted the tall steeple: but although the view from the summit is very extensive, the flat shores of the Scheldt offer very little to gratify curiosity: in short, it is hardly worth the labour of mounting so high, to look so low.

We returned in time to make proper preparations for dinner, Firkins imagining that we were to have a snug little party all by ourselves; and rubbing his hands at the thoughts of the forthcoming feast, he allowed his purse-pride to ride the high horse.

"Always have the best wines—must encourage honest people—hope they won't starve the cause. Waiter talks of three guilders—hope they may have as many carvers—hey, Jenny! Fine sight that dead man in the church—wonder what they stick lights round him for—can't be to make him a new liver—Eye to business in their prayers—saw an old woman collecting coppers—made all the people pay something but us—knew we were of the other sort—smoked you Virginia—Don't like chairs in a church—never did—Fine place for the wax and tallow chandlers—saw about fifty candles stuck upon nails by an image—sad blockheads to place the lights so low."

It was useless entering into long explanations concerning his objections; the only one I removed, was that relative to the collection of money; which I told him was for the chairs, being private property. To this he very sensibly replied:—

"Does not make the matter a bit better; why don't the old woman stand by her store, and get paid when they take them?—why, when

a man is praying, make him unhappy by touching his pocket?—can't think of two things at once."

The servant announced the dinner, and Lucius walked forward, leaving me to attend upon his daughter. He was quite wrapped up in his own grandeur and power of money, when he was suddenly directed into the room, where he found about sixty people gobbling away as if they were eating against time. The servant pointing to three chairs turned down, made him understand they were reserved for us. Never shall I forget Lucius's glance of offended dignity; he looked at the company as if he could have eaten them, and then broke out:—

"Unmannerly dogs to begin before a lady arrives!—tucking in like school-boys!—look at that fat fellow with a napkin under his chin—afraid of his frill in his greediness."

We did not wait to hear more, but pushed on to our seats, Virginia's face being as red as a lobster; she having in, passing her father, in vain endeavoured to make him advance. He walked with a most dignified step, bowing to

every one in front of him ; and having taken his seat, soon had his mouth stopped by the waiter, who offered him some soup. No sooner had he tasted it than he gave a loud whew ! and began his observations.

"Water bewitched—nothing but cabbage and the drainings thereof—rather better than an emetic, although very likely to have the same effect :—some wine, Gărsŏn."

The pronunciation of this word is decisive of an Englishman, not one out of a million being correct, and Firkins certainly not that lucky man. From the similarity of sound between the word in Dutch, and the English word *wine*, the waiter understood Lucius's orders, and brought him the list of those good things.

"Humph !" said Firkins, "not so bad after all—except in the company ;—here 's a regular invoice—a cargo of notions — all sorts — all prices ;—have the best—let 's look—here, Gărsŏn, bring some chambertine,"—which he pronounced exactly as it is written.

I was here unwillingly forced to become interpreter, to the no small annoyance of Firkins;

and his humour was by no means sweetened from the accumulated messes of greasy dishes, with the addition of this sour wine: however, as almost all novelty is pleasing, he by degrees allowed his natural good-humour to flow without any interruptions. It happened that as we rose from the table, a diligence going to Louvain, was about to drive out of the door; and no words can convey the astonishment of Lucius when he saw the unwieldy vehicle. He ridiculed the rope harness — the lumbering body—the folly of only having one door to open —the height and danger of those people perched upon the cabriolet part; and finished by declaring they were one hundred years behind us in everything that he had yet seen.

It would be useless to give an account of our growing intimacy: I had really become attached to Virginia, and had no doubt that it was mutual. I could discover no fault in her, excepting her name and parent's vulgarity; who, after all, was no worse than the many we daily see; who ask for mosēlle wine, and eat the toast under asparagus, with all the be-

nefit of the mephitic water which has drained from the vegetable. The temper, that great requisite in a wife, seemed beyond a doubt excellent; once or twice I had observed a slight twirl of the upper lip, and a flush on the face, but she never gave way to a hasty remark in my presence; and so good did she appear in manner and temper, that I soon began to be uncomfortable without her society. In the mean time, my name and fortune had been well examined by Lucius; who, after our residence at Antwerp for a fortnight, thus accosted me while we walked on the quay—the general resort of all people, high or low, in that half Dutch, half French city.

"I think you might do better with your fortune—all of it in the funds—very little interest—all the eggs in one basket—bad plan, Ganjam—could plant some five or ten thousand pounds for you—give excellent security—seven per cent.—in short, give you that for it myself."

Now I had but 10,000*l.* in the world; and I confess the income derived from the funds, although sure, was very trifling; and at this

declaration of Lucius, with his daughter in one scale, his riches in the other, I thought I could not do better than accept the offer, after I had first sounded Virginia's heart, and elicited from her, her father's fortune—her probable fortune—his trade, occupation, and connexions. To the proposition I answered that it would be very desirable to increase my income, and any hints he would give, I should listen to with respect. I think I spoke of the sum I had, exactly how it was situated, the income &c., and this I did with a double view; first, that he might, if he chose, warn me off the premises; and secondly, that, in the event of a proposition for Virginia, he never might be able to say he was disappointed as to my fortune and expectations.

I resolved now, although I had only known the family about three weeks, to risk my heart and hand once more. A man is a great blockhead if he is ever refused by a woman; he must either be excessively vain or uncommonly stupid, for the alteration of manner must be evident: surely one can always see if his com-

pany is desired, or if his absence is preferable. And I having duly weighed all the pro's and con's came to this decision, that Virginia loved me, and that my proposition would be well received.

Accordingly I watched an opportunity, when Firkins had ventured into the yard to examine the machinery used to retard these lumbering vehicles, the diligences, in their progress down hill, and which he averred to be much superior to our shoe system, to open my mind to Virginia. She was sitting on the sofa, dressed entirely in white with a blue sash; her long ringlets partly shading her face, and giving considerable effect to the dark eye which was directed as often towards me as to the work which she was spoiling.

I think that there is no one circumstance in life which makes a man feel so awkward as the commencement of a conversation which is to terminate in an offer: one gets hurried for fear of interruption, and in all probability the breaking the ground is the most ticklish part of the whole conversation. I sat down by her

side—took the work—examined it—asked for what use it was designed—pressed her hand when I returned it; and hummed and hawed, and broke down about a dozen times before we were in a conversation relative to our escape from the gale in the steam-packet.

This was a lucky hit; it enabled me to pay her divers compliments on her courage, and to express my gratitude for the confidence she placed in my judgment. We then got lifting our eyes to the ceiling, as if watching the clouds in their rapid progress shading and passing over the moon, and then we looked upon each other, and our eyes became absorbed, as it were, with the object before us; and then I thought I saw a moisture in her's—very expressive,—and then the very moment having arrived, according to my idea, I seized her hand, placed it to my heart, and had mustered courage to get as far as "Dearest object," when in walked Lucius Firkins, Esquire, endeavouring to poke into his pocket a long lock of hair, which he had either begged, borrowed, or stolen from a widow lady with whom

he had made acquaintance. As often as he withdrew his hand from his pocket, so often the long lock stuck to his fingers; and in the confusion of the discovery he thought the best plan was to retreat with his face to the company, feeling for the handle of the door with one hand, and poking away with the other at his pocket. He was, however, obliged to turn round to get out, and there, in all its shorn glories, dangled the long lover's lock, like the tail of a sick marmoset monkey.

Virginia, whose countenance expressed anything but a tender feeling when her father entered, relaxed into a very proper half-melancholy cast, and I, having undergone all the torture of the wicked from the interruption, found I had to begin *de novo*. That she expected me to continue was very evident, for she raised her languishing eyes, and fixed them full upon my face. "Dearest Virginia," I began, "can I ever forget that night of storm and darkness—"

"Oh, nonsense, Mr. Ganjam," she said, interrupting me, "I remember all about that; do talk of something else."

This was what a sailor would call 'being taken aback,' so I braced round, and commenced in another strain. "*My* dear Virginia, were you ever in Paris?"

"Pooh!" said she, rather hastily, "no; you know I never left England before in my life."

"Ah! then," I resumed, "you have a great city to see, a wonderful place, [here she looked at me with very different eyes but those of love,] a city in which may be found all the curiosities of the world, [*Oh!* she sighed] and a city from which I brought one thing, which, if you would accept, would make me a much happier man, and you, I hope, a happier woman."

During the latter part I observed a great change for the better in the barometer of love, and curiosity, thus excited, was not easily subdued.

"What is it?" she said, rather sharply.

"Nay, Virginia, my dear, I must be sure of your acceptance before I mention it; promise me not to refuse it, and I will show it you directly."

"Well, well, Mr. Ganjam, since you are so

fond of exacting promises which you may repent, I will punish you by promising to accept it."

"And you likewise promise not to change your opinion when you see it?"

"Oh! don't be so tiresome; I have told you I will accept it whatever it may be."

"Then, my own dearest Virginia, it is this wedding ring:" saying which I exhibited a plain ring, and endeavoured to try it on her finger. With maidenly modesty she baffled all my attempts, but in the love-like scuffle we often pressed each other's hands, and in fact she consented.

I will not go through the scene—the necessary tears to which ladies upon these occasions always resort,—if of joy for their hope being realized, if of regret for the probable parting from their parents, or if the sudden effusion of the heart which no care can check, I know not; —but when she placed her hand in mine, and allowed me to steal the first kiss from her blooming cheek, I felt a tremulous glow of rapture, and I thought, as I fixed my eyes upon my choice, that she was handsomer than a Venus,

with a figure far surpassing the representations of Diana. We then got a little cooler upon the business, and I resolved to extract the whole account of the father. With artless innocence Virginia told me he was a merchant resident in St. Mary-Axe; that he was not exactly in any one trade, but embarked largely in all; that he was reputed very rich, and that, as far as the comforts of the house at Camberwell could confirm the report, it must be true. She spoke of her carriages and horses, and concluded, that just before they left London Mr. Firkins had not been so cheerful as formerly, but that she imagined it to be occasioned by his dislike of leaving his occupations, or the dread he had of crossing the sea; and that for her own part she never credited what she had overheard, that some serious losses by rash speculations in the funds had occasioned the change. He left England, she added, with considerable regret, and was already tired of the Continent.

That evening I took the opportunity of divulging to Lucius the state of the case: he seemed to take it kindly; he spoke of what he

hoped he should be able to do for his daughter, and told me that he had long since observed the growing attachment, and had written to England, and received very favourable reports of my family; he therefore had no objection whatever to the match, and from that moment he should consider me as his future son-in-law. I felt a world of woe taken from my existence; I now saw affluence and contentment in the future, and I resolved to forget the past, and be, if possible, a happy being. The conversation then fell upon my income, and the folly of allowing so much to lie in the funds at 3 per cent. I willingly acceded to his advice, and having left a power of attorney with my bankers to sell out, receive the dividends, &c., I wrote to them, giving instructions that 8,000*l.* should be sold out and paid to Holdfast, Snug, and Co., on account of Lucius Firkins, Esq., he giving me at the same time a regular bond for the money, *promising to pay* seven per cent. upon that sum, and to give his daughter a thousand a-year, and start her fairly and properly in life. Little did I dream, when I, five weeks before, saw my affianced wife wed an-

other, that I should be soon in the mesh again. I had sworn fifty thousand times never to look on woman's face with any reliance on their constancy, and now I found myself pledged to Virginia Firkins, having the father's consent, and no impediments likely to occur to mar the marriage. From this time we were always together, and although I endeavoured to find a fault in my future wife, yet I am bound to say that she appeared perfect. No angel seemed blessed with a better temper; she was liberal to the poor, anxious to relieve the distressed, and never deaf to the voice of supplication. I urged her to be married at Brussels, and she consented. The father saw no objection, and we repaired to that capital, taking a large house near the park, and setting up a very excellent establishment, which Virginia managed with skill. It is true that some vulgarities, trifling in themselves, but the consequence of a boarding-school education, now and then intruded themselves; but, generally speaking, Virginia was very far above the common herd of girls educated in such a manner, and left early in life to the mere superintend-

ence of a governess, without a mother to watch or a sister to assist. No tide of love ever ran smoother. Firkins left us the control of our own time; the Park was our usual morning's and evening's ramble, and after we had seen the palace of the Prince of Orange, still left a sight, and had wandered through every hole and corner at the discretion of our merciless *valet de place*, we dwindled down into the real sentimental lovers, talked of groves, of cottages, of retirement, and domestic comforts, and drew so flattering a picture of the matrimonial state, that we were both very much enamoured of the drawing, and both ready to commence matrimony as soon as Lucius Firkins, Esq. could be brought to give, at the solicitors of the embassy, his consent, approbation, and money.

What had been communicated to Lucius from London was kept by that steady old merchant as a profound secret; he merely seemed to eat with greater voraciousness, to answer shorter than usual, to appear profoundly meditative, and not unfrequently did we meet him walking in the identical gaiters and shoes in the walks of the Park, with his hands behind him, trailing

after him his umbrella, talking to himself, and so exquisitely absent that we sometimes stood before him to impede his progress, when he would slip on one side, bow to us, and continue his steps, quite unconscious that it was his own child and his future pet son-in-law who had crossed his path. I must own that this sudden alteration in his manner, coupled with the gentle discredited hints concerning losses, made me once or twice think that I had been too precipitate in parting with my money; but when I looked at Virginia, and heard her speak of her great expectations, and when I knew that she frequently was engaged in answering her father's letters, and was in short a kind of confidential secretary, and was moreover my affianced bride, I rubbed the hands of confidence, and dismissed from my thoughts all the fears to which men are subject when they have lost sight of their portmanteaus, and know not the name, address, or characters of the porters.

I became, as all enamoured people do become, anxious for a day to be fixed when we were to be married, and I resolved the first good opportunity, when Firkins could bring

himself to listen to anything else than the foreign policy, to call upon my good father-in-law to name the moment;—and thus the conversation was carried on when Virginia had left the room after dinner, and Firkins and myself were left alone, saving and excepting some delicious fruit, and not a bad bottle of claret.

"Any news to-day, Robert?" said the merchant; "have you seen the papers?"

I must add, that Lucius was one of those ignorant bigoted people called Tories, who really believed that a nation might be happy without the assistance of Radicals and levelers, and who had got those old-fangled notions. that kings and peers were born above the general herd: he really fancied, poor old blockhead! that, because the writings of the sacred volume confirmed it, it must be true. We who know how mistaken the poor old fellow was, and who have seen the glorious revolution of July, and been witnesses to the march of liberty in the French capital, and who have been shown that half Antwerp and Brussels have been ruined by the division of opinion,

laugh at his conservatism; and whilst we titter with Sydney Smith at the idea of hereditary legislators, and men being ennobled by birth, we hail with pleasure the doctrine of universal suffrage, vote by ballot, no established church, no king, no lords, all commons, and lots of radicals.

"I have been," I responded, "walking all day with Virginia, and have had no time to look over the papers; but I heard that some victory had been gained by the Queen of Portugal's party, and that the fleet of Don Miguel was captured by Admiral Napier."

"Ha!" replied the good man, "this comes of non-intervention; allowing people to hire themselves out to commit robberies and murders: had the Portuguese been left to fight it out with one another, this, which I do not credit, could never happen. I never could reconcile to my mind people lending themselves to fight for a nation to which they do not belong, when no property of their's is at stake, and no honour to be obtained."

I had never heard Mr. Firkins make so animated a speech before, so I only answered,

"That it was a report, which of course needed confirmation."

After a dead silence of about five minutes, during which time Firkins had filled his glass three times and emptied it as often, had rubbed one ear as red as a flower-pot, and twisted his hair about in a manner to convince me that it was his own, inasmuch as he might have paid for it, I hemmed, and thus spoke.

"My dear sir, you were good enough, at Antwerp, to give your consent to the union of myself and Virginia, and I believe at my suggestion we came to Brussels in order that the marriage might take place."

"Ay!" ejaculated Lucius.

I repeated the remark, and as he nodded his head, I continued, "That it was my wish, under his sanction, to meet my happiness as soon as possible;" and I finished, after a long rigmarole remark upon dawning prospects, &c. with a hope that he would fix the day.

"Quite impossible!" he replied; "out of the question just yet: perhaps I shall be obliged to go over to England before the end of the

week: bad business this fleet-taking — very sorry, can't fix anything—must wait a little."

To this I replied, "That going to England would hasten the business, I hoped, as there a person could get called in the church, and the marriage-service, and the lawyer's papers, might progress at one and the same time."

"Very true—very true, say no more about it at present; bad job—that action, I mean; wants confirmation though, thank God!—have doubts — Damn these ministers! — ruined the country, upset every branch but radicalism and rioters; must go to look after this report myself, so don't expect me to join your walk this evening."

The next day I received a letter from my banker, mentioning "That the stock had been realized to the amount desired, and paid as directed." I felt a very uncomfortable shudder come over me, one of those cold twitches which herald misfortune, and which are only remembered after the event has happened. Firkins had received a whole bundle of letters, which he would neither allow his daughter to

read nor to answer, but shutting himself up in his room, desired he might not be disturbed. The action was confirmed; every tongue in the liberal nation wagged in favour of the victors. It was a great action, a brave, well-planned, determined fight, and although there are many who endeavour to detract from the gallantry of Napier, first, because the enemy did not fight as might have been expected, and secondly, on the superiority of his crew; yet the great merit rests upon his gallantly bearing down upon a superior force, for he was uninformed of the treachery in the enemy's ships; and all that determined valour, cool courage, and English bravery could exhibit, was done, when the order was given to "close the enemy." But, although success is never rash, yet, had he failed, the cause was lost for ever. It was this wise consideration which kept back Sartorius; for admirals should weigh the consequences of a defeat before they rashly hazard it. Illuminations were made, dinners were given, toasts drunk, salutes fired, each and every one a knell in the ears of Firkins, who had settled down into a hopeless melancholy, and could say not a sen-

tence without adding a pretty warm wish for a hot habitation for Lord Palmerston.

As Virginia was rather indisposed the following morning, and which I now suspect arose from some slight insight into her father's affairs, I resorted to the reading-room, and there I long sat in hopes of getting a glance at a newspaper. The politicians who held possession, talked and read, and then exchanged the papers; at last, one old gentleman, who had been shaking his spectacles, laid down a tory paper, which I was fortunate enough, if being informed of one's ruin can be called fortunate, to obtain. I turned to the city article first, because those dealers in money and proppers of national credit form the barometer of a state. It contained an animated account of the excitement on the Stock-Exchange, in consequence of the sudden and unexpected rise of Portuguese and Spanish stock; it mentioned that several brokers had waddled—the term when a man is unable to meet the demand upon him, and, in short, either bolts or breaks. The paper was full of Napier's gallant victory, but still considering the settlement of the great question as

far from terminated. I do not know what led me to look at the Gazette part, but I did look, and there, amongst those honourable men who make a fortune by bankruptcy, I saw "Lucius Firkins, John Keg, and Co., merchants, St. Mary-Axe, to surrender 22nd August; solicitors, Doems and Hasty, Furnival's Inn." I read it over five times;—the name was beyond a doubt—the place of residence, the profession, all, all confirmed my worst apprehension. I left the reading-room, which in consequence of the late hour had become vacant, and as I resolved at once to know the extent of my misfortunes, pocketed the paper, not wishing to do a dishonest act, but with the firm intention of replacing it that very evening. On my return I found Lucius Firkins in high spirits, Virginia all smiles and graces, the dinner ready, and only waiting for me. My face was the index of my mind.

"You are unwell, my dear Robert," said Virginia, looking at me with a smile upon her countenance, "but I suppose it is merely over fatigue. You will be better after dinner; why, now that is unkind to look so moody and so

melancholy, and never to have inquired concerning my health, when you know I was from indisposition prevented accompanying you to-day. I have some good news in store for you, which I will keep secret, if you do not smile and look happy."

"And I have some bad news, which I cannot long keep secret; but come, let us to dinner with what appetite we may, for this is the last dinner we may ever eat together."

"What do I hear?" said the affrighted girl, relinquishing my arm and looking me full in the face, "What have I done to deserve this? do you want me to resay again and again that I love you? do you doubt my sincerity, my attachment, my honour?"

"Neither one nor the other, dearest Virginia," I replied; "I hardly knew what I said, my heart is so heavy, my mind is almost distracted, and I find myself upon a giddy precipice, likely to fall into the deepest depth, without a hand to stay me."

"Unkind, ungenerous, Robert, to have such a misfortune and not allow me to share it! you

hear my father's impatient voice; before we go down tell me, I beseech you, does this news that you have heard, touch me, touch you, as to honour?"

"Not in the least, my angel, I assure you; it will touch me, I fear, but not there at any rate," and I found myself with a smile at my own words, when I could ill maintain one. "To dinner, my dear, your father calls, and after it we will explain."

That dinner was not eaten with pleasure. I thought the man before me a most pernicious scoundrel, who, by luring me to love his daughter, had secured almost all I possessed; and having squandered that in a month, perhaps a day, which would have lasted me for life, was inwardly chuckling at the villany he had committed, and smiling in the face of his ruined victim. The marriage, if he were the bankrupt, I knew would be madness on both sides; she to unite herself to a pauper, and I to marry the daughter of a man whom I must for ever hate, loathe, despise, abominate! Even when he asked me, in a tone of familiarity, to drink some wine, and when he in his cursed

vulgarity and freedom said, "Here's to you, my boy," I could have pounced upon him like a tiger, and torn the very flesh from his bones. Virginia never spoke, neither did she eat; every now and then I saw her direct her eyes towards me, and observed her cautiously remove a tear, which otherwise would have run down her face. She could not trust herself to express one word, for the cup of bitterness was full, and wanted but the one drop to overflow it. When she rose from table, she made a sign that she should soon be ready, and shutting the door, I was alone with the father.

"The news," he began, "not so bad after all—see some new ships purchased for Miguel—only offer money, and plenty of men are ready. My letters say accounts exaggerated—steady fellow my partner old John Keg—honest man—wouldn't deceive me—never told a lie in his life, and too cautious of course to write one. Bad plan, as the blackamoors say, 'to make paper speak.' Litera scripta—remember that. What 's the matter? why you look like a man with weak eyes on a cold day—not ill, I hope?

no lovers' quarrels, ay? — soon make up— Jenny kind girl—heart soft as a water-melon inside, melts as easily."

"Sir," I replied, "your daughter and myself have not quarrelled, neither do I doubt the goodness, the excellency of her heart; but I have read some news which I confess has tended to throw a cloud over all my prospects, and turn me a beggar into the world. I am half a sailor, you know, and I always speak as I think; and, therefore, my expressions will be brief and to the point:—either you are a most injured man, or you are the damnedest scoundrel unhung!"

"What!" said the old man, darting from his chair, "who dares insult Lucius Firkins in that manner? a name well known upon Change —respected upon Change, young insolent man —whose word's his bond—who never injured any soul breathing—who can put his hand to his heart and say, 'The man who says one word against the integrity, the honour, the respectability, the affluence of Firkins, is a scoundrel and a liar!' You are not the man, I hope?"

"Not I, sir," I replied coolly; "but the papers upon these points seldom err—I wish to God they could, or did in this instance; pray be seated, I am as much injured as you are, for my ruin is involved in yours, and therefore——"

"What ruin!" he interrupted, "are you mad? At this moment I am worth 8000*l.* a year—who can be ruined with that? Ah! I see, because I would not fix a day—thought I should have to go to town:—marry to-morrow if you like—"

"And live upon air, I suppose!" I replied. "How am I to exist, tell me that?"

"One of the governors of Bedlam, thank God!" said Lucius; "get you in easily enough. Stark mad, poor boy! How live? with what you have, and I give you, you may live like Leopold here."

"Sir, sir," I interrupted, "for God's sake save me the pain of being obliged to speak of you as I fear I shall, if you persevere in duplicity. Look at this, sir," I said as I opened the newspaper, and pointed to the gazette; "Look at this, sir, and then cover your confu-

sion as you may; but you are unmasked—a gazetted bankrupt."

I thought I had killed the old merchant; he could not place his spectacles to his eyes, either through rage or apprehension he trembled like a leaf; he held the paper, but his eyes were unable to trace the writing. He looked like an idiot, and even I relented when I saw the old man almost falling from his seat, and in vain endeavouring to give vent to his feelings; for the words choked in his throat, and he could not articulate a syllable. At this terrible moment Virginia entered and beckoned to me. I pointed to her father; her eyes in a second discovered the painful situation, and rushing towards him, she knelt down and eagerly besought him to unravel the mystery. With the gaze of idiotcy he pointed to me; and then, holding the paper at arm's length, he half closed his eyes and endeavoured to read. Virginia snatched it from him, and running her eye over the fatal part, she read aloud, her glance catching her father's name,—"Lucius Firkins and John Keg and Co., St. Mary Axe, merchants, to surrender—" She read no more, for

her poor old father had fallen from his chair senseless, and the efforts of the child were instantly turned to his assistance, and to his restoration to reason. She placed his head on her lap; she bathed his temples with water, which her own tears might have supplied; she never cast a glance upon me; she took the eau de Cologne which I offered, without a word; and when she saw her poor old father's eyes again open, and with all the intelligence of intellect unimpaired, she placed both her hands together, and lifting her eyes to heaven exclaimed, "My God! my God! receive a daughter's thanks!"

By degrees the old man recovered sufficiently to be removed to his room, and that night the eyes of his daughter never closed; she remained at his bed-side, watching each wish, and eager to alleviate the slightest pain. As the old man groaned and vainly endeavoured to speak, the only words he did utter were—

"Grossly deceived—a villain—a robber!"

And here the excitement overcame him, and he sank down on his pillow more dead than alive. The medical man who was called in—

a short dumpy dawdle, with a remarkable red nose and large protuberance, desired the patient might be kept quiet, ordered a sleeping draught, took his fee, waddled out, and promised to call again on the morrow.

With that morrow came the confirmation of my ruin, and likewise another proof of the impolicy of one partner relying implicitly upon another. Firkins, it appeared, had been regularly the dupe of Keg; for having believed him honest, he had almost retired from the business, leaving his partner to carry it on, receiving regularly a handsome profit, and being under the comfortable delusion that he was an affluent man. In the mean time Keg had entered into various ruinous speculations, had taken up immense sums to pay continued losses on the Stock Exchange, and being a Tory, and only looking at the Tory papers, or at least only believing them, he had sold Portuguese stock to an immense amount; and when the sudden rise came, he was unable to meet the demand of some of his business creditors, whose bills became due at the same time. A fiat was issued; Firkins was ruined, and his partner

secured in gaol. Firkins's anxiety concerning the victory arose entirely from his partner having mentioned that he had speculated on his own account to some trifling amount; for he himself had never played at any game where the odds were so much against him.

Now came the grand finale. I was easily persuaded that Firkins was innocent; that I had fallen with himself from the villany of his partner. The last sad explanation had yet to take place. The invalid gradually recovered, and with his recovery came back his desire to act honourably.

"I will surrender myself. I know I am liable. I will yet put my shoulder to the wheel, and leave my daughter something, and your money I will live to repay; but the marriage must be broken off. Without Virginia I should die, and she is too good a daughter to leave me in my old age to die alone and in wretchedness; for this last blow I have now prepared you, Robert. Look upon me as one more sinned against than sinning, and the most incredulous shall be satisfied, that if I

have ruined them, it was in consequence of a misplaced confidence, and my character shall stand forth to the world unsullied. Virginia's parting with you will be a heavy blow, for she loves you dearly; therefore do not upbraid me before her. Trust to my word, my honour, that one day this shall be repaid you fourfold; but now to encourage the match, were the height of human absurdity."

"You go to London to-morrow, dearest Virginia," said I, "and you will, I know, pay your father that attention he deserves at your hands; but we—"

"Must part also," she said with much firmness. "The events of this day have changed me entirely; not in my love, for of that I am proud, but you could ill afford to take a portionless girl, with a bankrupt father, for your wife."

"You mistake me sadly, my angel; for to-morrow, if you like, I will fulfill my promise. As I would have married you rolling in wealth, so will I marry you a pauper; and I may add, as I offered my hand with my fortune, now I offer it without it."

"Never, Robert, never. Under the circumstances of the case you could not love my father, and without that I should never be happy. I feel now that duty, not love, should sway me. I am not unmindful of your generous, your manly behaviour; but it shall never be said, that when misfortunes weighed my father down, the natural prop forsook him. One thing, Robert, believe, and that is, that you have not been swindled of your property. It will be returned to you by my uncle; but perhaps not for some time. And now farewell, I hope not for ever. Time may do much to restore us to affluence. I will not allow you to hold yourself engaged to me; but if under more favourable circumstances we should meet, you will find me without any other engagement, and with a heart as sincerely your's as it is at this moment."

I clasped her to my arms; I felt myself unmanned; in vain I struggled to speak. She implored me to be silent, and in returning the embrace I gave, she burst into tears and rushed into her room. I now resolved to take leave of the father. The short mode of speech,

which was an affectation, gave way to nature, as I said:

"Dear sir, do not imagine for a moment that I believe you to have known the extent of your misfortunes or to have duped me; and I implore you to pardon me the ungenerous remark I made, under a false impression, and smarting under my ruin."

He took me by the hand, and leading me to the window said:

"As sure as you behold that sun, so surely shall your property be restored, and with full interest. My name will not even be suspected when I have once delivered myself up, and shown my partner's letters. I am above deceit, and I abhor it. Now, good-b'ye for the present. I will manage that, although I may want, you shall not; and under the existing misfortune you will release Virginia from her contract, in order to be unshackled yourself. Good-b'ye, Robert, good-b'ye."

The next day they embarked at Antwerp, and I left Brussels for Paris.

CHAPTER V.

> Oh, Love, thou art the very God of Evil;
> For after all I cannot call thee *Devil*.
>
> BYRON.

ON arrival in France the first thing was to hurry to Banana; and after all the lingering hours spent in the crawling, creeping diligence, Ganjam was safe in the French capital. Even Banana shook his head at the intelligence; even his misfortunes for a moment gave way to a participation in his nephew's woes,—but to relieve them was impossible.

How men of any mind hate pity!—it is the veriest wormwood that is mixed in the cup of misfortune; to smile at another's woe is cruel

and unmanly, but to pity him, is to heighten his misery, and to leave him a greater prey to the gnawings of remorse. You may pity my dog if you tread upon his paw, but if you are merciful, do not pity your fallen friend; soothe him, relieve him to the best of your abilities, but lay him not under the cursed obligation of pity.

I had now one or two chances left,—with the money I had, to court fortune's favours by gambling, or by making a show (for one should never be poor, and appear so) marry some lady with riches enough to save me from once more embarking on the seas and working out my existence, or the miserable abasement of solicitating charity. Whilst pondering over these chances, for I could not turn my hand to anything else but that and scribbling, Banana called at my respectable lodgings *au cinquième*, and, after puffing and blowing like a fatigued porpoise, he drew the only remaining chair near to the wood-fire, hemmed three times, and thus spoke:—

"Do you know, Robert, that I would much sooner be the victim of fortune as you are, than be her plaything as I am: she leads me on from flower to flower, as I approach they turn to thorns, and I never retire without feeling a reverse which I never anticipated. Now just listen to me, for since you were made a pauper, you have turned over a new leaf in your manners, and I hope are not so fond of interrupting people when they speak as you used to be. You are very cold here; why don't you keep a better fire? and Lord bless me! the wind is whistling through that keyhole strong enough to turn a mill. I never shall forget the ear-ache I once got that way. But to your situation. You are, I see, ruined, quite ruined. I am very sorry; but if a man will degrade himself by jobbing with a bankrupt, he must expect to be ruined. I have brought you this trifling check, put it in your pocket, and look at it when I am gone: it will give you one or two dinners at Richard's in the Palais-Royal, where a man gets four dishes for two francs,

wine included. I wish you did not live so high, it makes me in such a perspiration to come up to you,—and then your room is so cold that one gets a chill; don't you find it so?"

Stung to the heart, I knew not how to answer; my very blood boiled at his remarks. Then, *obliged* to receive a gift from the ungenerous hand which smote, as it relieved me! I knew he was my sheet-anchor, my last hope; to offend him was to complete my ruin: I therefore confined myself to a bare monosyllable, and answered "Yes."

"Yes—then why the devil do you live up so high, unless it is to be nearer heaven than you deserve? But you have not heard my miseries. Oh, *I am* the most Unfortunate Man in the whole world! you shall hear. When I left Boulogne and came to Paris, my great object was to learn French; for when I was young I went through the grammar, and had a good pronunciation; not that I ever could understand you—you talk at such a pace, and besides, your pronunciation is very bad. I assure you I have heard that remarked more

than once. Well, I got into a *pension*, where I was told I should not hear a word of English, and paid a month in advance. I had for my three hundred francs a nice room, not such a hole as this, good furniture, &c. and every comfort promised. In the mean time I had subscribed to Bennis's* library for the newspapers, in the Rue Neuve St. Augustin: his name is more French than Galignani; besides, it is nearer, and one can get along through the mud to him, whereas the Rue Vivienne is such a crowded dirty street, that one requires boots like a French postilion to waddle through the mire of that great thoroughfare of Paris. Well, at five o'clock I appeared dressed as usual for dinner, and on entering the *salon*, to my great astonishment, instead of only finding six people, I found sixteen, and to my horror,

* Mr. Bennis's library is worth subscribing to; independently of receiving almost every newspaper in the whole world, he has an immense collection of works; the situation is one of the best in Paris; and I am glad here to testify the civility and attention of the proprietor. Our old friend Galignani is too far from the fashionable resort, and Mr. Bennis has availed himself of this oversight, and planted his tent in the very centre of the plane.

almost all of them were speaking English. The lady of the house joined in the conversation, and it was evident enough, that instead of our learning French we were teaching her English. We sat down seven of a side, a top and bottom. The dishes were all placed on the table for inspection, and then one by one removed, carved on the side-table, and handed round. Filthy abomination floated on the greasy gravy of the seven-times cooked *salmi*. The *bouilli* was as dry as a Norwegian plank, and splintered off like a teak-built ship when struck by a long shot;—one might as well have eaten the chips in a carpenter's shop as this ragged *viande*. The fish was handed to us, at the end, and the vegetables were not destined to join company with the meat, and seemed to abhor the court of requests. The wine was light, muddy, and sour; the fruit was old, stale, and dry; the soup was water, and the fish was a stranger long exiled from its element; the roast was roasted to a rag, and the boiled was boiled to a block. Of the other things, called *ragoûts*, *vol au vents*, &c. I was sick long before I tasted

them; and having imbibed a sufficient quantity of wine to render medicine needless, we retired one and all into the *salon*. No time was lost, coffee followed the dinner, and some liquor constituted the rear-guard—a kind of protection against internal assaults. But I soon found out, that at these *pensions* the most lucrative part to the landlady arose from a certain sum paid for every game at *écarté*, and consequently, no sooner had we swallowed the liquid fire, dignified as Curaçoa, but the elder part of the company began to form in groups about the card-table. A lady placed herself by the side of the table with pencil and book, and from the amount of each stake abstracted the necessary fee to the landlady. But here, Robert, I must tell you of a few suspicions which have entered my mind, perhaps erroneously; I am sure I hope so, for I never can abide dishonesty—and from ladies, and English ladies, all in silks and satins! Several ladies were anxious, as I was a stranger, to show me every possible attention. They heard in the course of conversation that I was just arrived from

India, and the lady of the house had asked me once or twice if I liked my stables, and if *all* my horses were in good order after travelling up from Calais.

"One sometimes likes to be asked these questions, because it gives the appearance of not having come to the *pension* in order to save money, but for the sake of society. I was overwhelmed with civility. One lady was very inquisitive to know if I knew her cousin Mr. Smith of Madras; and another, who was anxious to show off her personal appearance, not being more than forty, and with a good red and white complexion, inquired after Mr. Brown of Calcutta, who, she had often remarked, spoke of the same Mr. Smith above-mentioned, with whom he dined almost every day. Each offered me a seat at the table, and at last I consented to place myself under the control and management of Miss Blondel, of whom strange stories are related as to her capabilities of insuring her victim, when she falls into the mesh of love, by swearing her existence was miserable, and death preferable to neglect.

She had, however, failed in making man the slave of her caprice; and now, in the full luxuriance of thirty-five, and with the most delightful hair and sweetest expression of countenance, she has abandoned an ungrateful world, and is more content with the domestic manners of a *pension*, than the foolish exhibition of crowded rooms, with all the necessary attendants of young dandies and old fools. 'Mr. Banana,' said she to me, as she accidentally touched my hand, 'do you sit down opposite Mrs. Handicraft, and I will advise you what to play.' I sat down.

'Have you any choice of cards, Mr. Banana?' said Mrs. Handicraft, who is a thin wizen-faced lady, with rather inflamed eyes and pale face, looking like a Turkish tombstone in her turban.

'None whatever, ma'am,' I replied, 'I am not superstitious.'

'I am to deal, I believe, Mr. Banana,' said the sepulchral apparition.

"In the mean time, five-franc piece after five-franc piece was placed on her side of the table,

whilst on mine was the solitary diminished ghost of a shilling belonging to Miss Blondel; —of course I must have been mistaken, but I really thought I saw Miss Blondel put down ten francs the other side, and whisper to a dragon in petticoats to look after the silver fishes. Now you know, Robert, I never play for money. I would not mind a rattle of the dice for a pickle of coffee, because that is in the way of business; but to circulate money without any positive security was never my failing. The little French secretary took up the solitary franc of Miss Blondel, and remarked that forty-nine francs were wanting on my side; as I could not appear to be deficient in money, especially the first night, I put my hand in my waistcoat-pocket and took out a double napoleon. There were now nine francs short, upon which Miss Blondel put down another, and by degrees three more came creeping on the table. Five francs were still deficient, and rather than keep Mrs. Handicraft in suspense, more especially as she had dealt the cards and looked at her hand, and balanced the trump very

unevenly, I said I would stand the rest. '*Le jeu est fait*,' remarked the little secretary—the card was turned, and hearts were trumps.

"Miss Blondel sat close by my side; one hand gently supporting her weight rested on my chair, whilst the other, adorned with various rings, and white and beautiful, remained upon the table. She seemed to be imitating a shake on the piano with her fore and middle fingers, and I hardly remarked that I had but *two* trumps in my hand, so much was I charmed with the beautifully-formed *flipper* (as you sailors call it) of the light-haired assistant to my ignorance.

'*J'ai l'honneur, Madame, de proposer*,' said I, with a good pronunciation.

"The levee of betters who stood behind Mrs. Handicraft looked significantly at each other, whilst Miss Blondel, now no longer shaking, placed her thumb and little finger on the table.

"Now, Robert, I would not say so for the world, but I have been told that the thumb sometimes stands for the king, and the little

fingers are typical of an inferior trump; and true enough I remember to have had the king and the eight,—but I cannot believe that such a thing could have been done purposely. We know that people who are musical often play in imagination on a table; it is the pleasures of memory in reality; and even Rogers refers to it, although *not signally*, (it seems as if he knew, however, how people might be informed,) and evidently hints it in these lines:—

> "And through the frame invisible convey
> The subtle quick vibrations as they *play*;
> Man's little universe at once o'ercast,
> *At once illumined*, when the *cloud* is past."

"After some hesitation Mrs. Handicraft replied, '*Combien*,' and I discarding, said '*Trois*.'

"Fortune is a fickle goddess, as you know, Robert, and we all know the old adage 'Cards will beat their makers'; so, in spite of all manœuvring, I took in two trumps and another king.

"I marked the king and was about to play it, when Miss Blondel advised me to play the king of clubs, which I had taken in; to

which I dissented, showing that, if I had four trumps, she could but have three, and the king was as good as a trump when they were expended: so, in spite of remonstrance, I was almost resolved to play my king of trumps, and try for the *vole*. However, I yielded to the soft persuasion, and Mrs. Handicraft immediately trumped the king and played back a diamond. I took it, and led the king, upon which she said, 'Ah! you have the trick;' and turning her cards face downwards shuffled them up,—but, most unfortunately, the nine of clubs fell like a dead Hassan* with his face upwards. I instantly perceived the revoke, and was about to inquire into it, when Mrs. Handicraft shuffled the cards together, and commenced an animated discussion about a ball to which she was going. I was *done*—I saw it, I knew it, but I did not dare mention that I suspected any such thing, especially from a lady in a turban — the very fac-simile of Turkish honour and uprightness, which none doubt but those who have

* His back to earth, his face to heaven,
Fallen Hassan lies.—*Giaour*.

never *dealt* with them. The next deal I got two more points, and on her dealing again she turned up the king, and marked another point. It was now my deal, and I am very careful always to give three first and two afterwards; but when I turned up the king, which would have given me the game, Mrs. Handicraft remarked 'how unfortunate it was, as she had only four cards;' she certainly appeared to have no more, and I yielded at once. She dealt, and dealt me the king; this time I saw her five cards upon the table, so showing the emblem of royalty I pronounced 'game,' and in an instant Miss Blondel swept the money to my side. She first of all paid herself six francs, she being only entitled to four; then came her friend who took four more; and by the time she had done playing with the prize, I got back my double napoleon —which a gentleman with grey hair, and marked with the small-pox, was kind enough to volunteer to change, by which he would have made nine sous, owing to the premium upon gold—and about thirty francs instead of forty-five. At this moment, in my

hurry to shuffle up the money, my handkerchief dropped, and, as Mrs. Handicraft rose to make way for a successor, I perceived a card slip from her silken dress and fall down at her feet—it was the fifth card, when she so conveniently had but four. I rose also, but was implored by Miss Blondel to resume my seat, to which I gave a determined negative, but promised to bet on her side if she would play; to this at last she assented, and I soon began to perceive the difference with the others; instead of betting ten or fifteen francs, one at a time came down. I remarked also that Miss Blondel never took up her cards until the opponent had either proposed or played; when she dealt, she counted the cards before she turned up the trump; and when she won, which she did, she paid herself first and with good interest. I now asked for the twenty francs to which I was entitled, having placed ten upon Miss Blondel and won. There were but ten francs left, somebody had taken the rest; she was very sorry, very much ashamed, and offered to pay me herself; this, of course, I could not accede

to, and thus was rather duped again. Still I could scarcely credit my suspicions; for ladies, and English ladies, to do such barefaced acts, was almost without the circle of probability; but still there was a redeeming nobleness of the whole sex, in the liberal manner Miss Blondel offered to pay it herself. But this is all a trifle; I merely wished to show you how people may be gulled in France, and to warn you, Robert, never to play at *écarté* unless you know your adversary and your friends. I have been told that the semaphore at the top of the Admiralty in the Place Louis XVI. never went quicker during the first intelligence of the rise in Catalonia, than the fingers of Frenchmen or English ladies at a *pension* during the anxious moment of the dubious property of one franc. Unfortunately for me, throughout life I have been unsuspicious, and even now cannot believe in the shufflings of Mrs. Handicraft, or the twitches of the musical fingers of Miss Blondel.

"I had not been a fortnight at this *pension*, at which I was in the situation of paymaster, before I perceived the very palpable intentions

of the lady of the house. Her husband was an author, who had scraped together some indifferent verses, and published them. As far as I could understand them, they were lines terminating in rhyme, and constituted as poetry by the author: he was rather poor, very proud, and exceedingly egotistical. His wife, who, independent of her domestic cares, gave me lessons in French and patience, was a good-natured soul, generally very lively, and always very attentive. One morning, when I was reading a book she had selected for my studies, and which was a work on charity, I observed, as I came to a part where an honest and hard-working couple were reduced to sudden misery owing to a theft committed in their house, that the lady burst out into a violent fit of tears; she rose from the chair, and fainted most excellently, falling on a sofa and making a very plentiful display. How to call back the fleeted spirits I knew not, but I rubbed her forehead, chafed her temples, and having perceived how suspended animation was restored in cases of drowning, and remembering Haidée's manner in regard to

Don Juan when he was washed ashore,* I leaned over the reclining figure of the fainting fair, breathed into her mouth, and endeavoured by rubbing her heart, which I succeeded in reaching, to restore the angelic form to a new existence. The situation I admit to have been critical, for I had forced her dress rather off her shoulders, and the discovery made by the husband as he opened the door was by no means very comfortable: he found his wife stretched upon the sofa pale, and to all appearances dead; an almost perfect stranger breathing into her mouth, and so occupied in the pious and laudable service, as to allow the husband actually to touch him before the kind assistant remarked the approach. I started as if electrified, and the wife at that moment recovering, gave a scream and fell back again. The husband fixed his inquiring eyes upon me; I knew not what to do, or what to say; the blood forsook my cheeks, and I resembled a

* The difference of the situations is great. Byron says:—

"And she lay o'er him, and he laid beneath,
Hushed as the child upon the mother's breast."

So the less we say about Haidée and Banana, the better for both.

rascal, although as innocent as Joseph and much better dressed.

"I felt instantly as if the suspicions of a jealous husband would, from the discovery, authorise any demonstration of rage; and whilst I stood shuffling, from my cursed bashfulness, pale with shame, and inarticulate solely from the suspicion which might attach to the case, one of the other doors, for in French rooms there are always four, opened, and Miss Blondel walked in with becoming gravity. 'I heard a scream,' she said, 'and oh! oh! my suspicions are but too true—cruel, cruel Banana!' Here she gasped for breath, appeared to be gradually going to follow the laudable example of fainting at discretion, but suddenly giving her scented handkerchief a tragedy-queen kind of flourish, she burst into tears and withdrew.

"To my very great surprise the French gentleman, who really is a mighty civil man, thanked me for my kind attention to madame, who, he said, was nervous from the loss she had experienced that morning; and who, from the sensibility of feeling, was very likely to faint, if any parallel

case happened to be mentioned. 'A thousand thanks, Monsieur Bănănā, for your goodness; she will soon be better.' And sure enough, from that moment, the words of her husband acting like a spell, she gradually called back existence, and raising herself to a sitting position, she went through the different stages of recovery to admiration. 'It was annoying, Monsieur,' said the husband, 'that *your* lady should come in at the moment she did: your English people are very suspicious; and from the love she appears to have taken for you, I fear she will commit suicide.' I cared very little about that, thank God; but was overjoyed to be relieved from my embarrassment by so much civility. I consequently asked what could have been so strongly fixed upon the lady's mind as to occasion the fainting fit; and I assured the husband that the indelicate exhibition arose from the necessity of the case. 'We have been very unfortunate;' he replied, 'one of our pensioners has this morning left us without settling his account, and our servant has stolen some silver spoons and decamped. The present

difficulty arises from some small debts which we had promised to pay to-morrow; this, perhaps, has rendered her more nervous than usual.' Then, sitting down on the edge of the sofa, he rubbed her hands, and gave me a broad hint to withdraw.

"The next morning I received the following letter,—here it is, author-like with a motto. You understand French when I read it, Robert, of course, because my pronunciation is perfect; at least so Madame Foljambe says. Here is the motto:—

'Les bonnes œuvres ne sont reservées qu'aux grands et bons cœurs.'

'MONSIEUR,

'Il est des cas où l'amour-propre souffre à certaines démarches, mais il est des personnes avec lesquelles la susceptibilité de l'honneur n'a pas de peine à s'ouvrir, et c'est ce que j'éprouve en ce moment, en vous donnant ce mot. Vous devinez bien que le brusque départ de Monsieur H—— nous place, pour le moment, dans une position difficile, et qui ne

le devait pas être, s'il fut resté, comme il avait été dit. Nous avons des engagements demain pour cent soixante francs, auquel nous eussions satisfait. Mais * * * * il ne nous est pas reservé d'y parvenir par le moyen naturel sous lequel nous avions dû compter.

'Monsieur, vous riche, et bon, et d'assez de discernement pour juger ce que nous sommes, surtout Madame Foljambe, femme vraiment angélique,—poussiez-vous nous obliger de nous prêter ces cent soixante francs, sur un engagement par elle et moi de vous les rétablir, ou à votre ordre, le 1er Septembre prochain. J'adresse avec confiance cette question et cette prière à votre loyale bienfaisance, et sans en parler même a Madame Foljambe, déjà trop affligée.

'Votre très respectueux serviteur,

'FOLJAMBE.

'17 Février 1833.'

"What do you think of that, Robert?"

"I will answer that, after you have answered this question. Pray how old is Madame Foljambe?"

"Three-and-twenty," replied my uncle.

"Then," I replied, "I think the fainting fit was a humbug; the servant is not true; that Mr. H. paid his account, and that you are destined to be the dupe: the whole thing was planned before, and you, as usual, fell into the trap. A pretty woman is a welcome guest, we are told; and one with such a form was aware of her fascinating power. That is what I think, uncle Banana."

"Ah, Robert," he said, "I grieve to see it; but when a man steps from his situation in life to an unworthy position, he must imbibe the bad principles of his fallen caste. I see all your ideas of honour are gone to the devil; from feeling yourself discredited, you discredit others; and let me add, I do not feel very much flattered by your imagining me such a dupe; perhaps you may repent of that before long. I always treated you with kindness, and I did not expect such rudeness from a nephew. Good morning, Robert; I hope your misfortunes, arising from your own folly, may soon

be so far past as to leave you independent of others for support. Good morning, *sir*."

It is said, "Words cut deeper than a sword." Could a man of honour hear such a speech and not curse the speaker? is it within the province of humanity to bear such chilling insults and not resent them—to feel oneself so degraded as to be forced to accept the gift whilst hating the donor? Hate him I did not, saving for his credulity, and his unfeeling manner of mentioning it. Incensed beyond all description, I hardly knew what I did, until, in the act of placing my last log upon the fire, the check fell from my pocket. I looked at it; it was for 600*l.*, enough to place me in affluence for three years. All my rage and my impotent exclamations gave way to a thrill of delight. With this and what remained of the wreck of my fortune I was above want; I resolved, therefore, to move into a *pension* myself, and began forthwith to make the necessary arrangements.

In one of my rambles near the Rue Louis-le-Grand, I espied a face familar to me, and yet from which I recoiled with fear and

trembling. The man was dressed in a frock-coat, furred at the cuffs and collar, with satin facings; he wore a piece of red ribbon to his button-hole,—a badge of honour once, but so common now as scarcely to be worth the thread which sews it to the coat. I have seen it on a dressing-gown, and once to a man's shirt. The man was a good specimen of a vulgar dandy, for when a *gentleman* does overdress himself, it is always done with some taste; but the gaudy exhibition of various colours in a female, and the over-fantastical harlequinade of satins on a man, with the necessary appendage of most probably copper-gilt chains, half-a-dozen under waistcoats, a rhinoceros horned stick (if that is not an Irishism), mark in the first case a woman of trifling virtue, and in the other the swindler: the latter attracts the attention of the weak and ignorant; his artful manner and apparent respectability complete the ruin of his victim. We both stopped and looked back, and yet, as recollection was not sufficiently strong to confirm our suppositions, we again turned and walked on. It was Villeneuve;

the idea struck me instantly of inquiring after Mizen, and I followed and overtook him. After the first salutation, I turned and walked down towards the Rue de la Paix, in company with my worst friend.

"Have you heard," I said, "if my poor adversary recovered from his wound?"

"Not I," he answered, with the most revolting want of common feeling; "not I; but I fear he recovered."

"Fear he recovered!" said I, my countenance lighting up with inexpressible joy; "do you really fear he did recover?"

"*Parbleu, oui!*" he answered, "for why a man should die of such a twopenny wound I can't imagine: if they had amputated his arm, after the first day, he would have been ready for you again by this time, and you might have lived to have repented of your foolish forbearance. Whenever, my friend," said he, tapping my shoulder, "you have an enemy in your claws, never let him escape. Mercy, generosity, honour, are words, as your great poet says, 'being full of sound and emptiness, signifying

nothing.' For my own part, if I ever gain a success I follow it up to the irrevocable ruin of my adversary; and had your gallant countryman fired first and missed, his corpse would have been left for the crows to peck at. But what are you doing here,—and not quite so well dressed as formerly?"

"You see me very different from what I was; you see me a ruined man, ruined by the perjury of others, and now an outcast from my own country, ready for anything but a dishonourable act."

"You *are* a lucky man, surely," he replied, "to be banished from a country where you are ridden over, rough-shod, by an aristocracy so exclusive as hardly to admit a younger son, under any circumstances, into their society; and yet you keep cringing and bowing to lords, as if they were a jot better than their neighbours. Besides, your taxes, your fashions, your follies—why, a man can't live in that country without heaps of gold; and then he must never aspire to anything beyond the commonalty—the shopkeepers, as Napoleon called them."

"You were never more mistaken in your life," I remarked. "It is true, our aristocracy are perhaps too exclusive; their retirement to live amongst themselves, is highly prejudicial to their state, and the day is not far distant when they will be levelled; but woe to that day which robs us of our nobility! In this country already the mischief is discernible; your ragged race of poor dependants almost upon public charity, sufficiently exposes your bad laws and revolutionary liberty. With us, the fortune generally descends to the eldest son, and so far from its being a curse upon the rest, it is a blessing; for if the fortune were divided, as is the case in France, we should have lords by hundreds upon the parish, the nobility would fall into disgrace, and those who ought to stand between the people and the throne, would merge into a class too ready to be excited, and too eager to demolish whatever is above them. Besides, the fortune being centred in one, that one has power, rank, station, and by his situation he is enabled to provide

honourably for his younger brothers, and these cease to be burthens upon their families by the exertions they are enabled to make through the interference, the station, of the elder branch. Whereas, look at this country: true it is, that after all the struggles you have made, after having the enemy in your capital, after a revolution which changed a dynasty, your national debt is one-half of ours, you are less taxed, and the luxuries of life are cheaper, but, from the overthrow of your nobility, every man is desirous of guiding the state: you rush into extremes; and Froye the tailor, in the Boulevards, considers himself just as elevated in the scale of society as Marshal Soult. I remember a courier who was talking of Marshal Gerard and said, 'We are of the same profession, but the marshal has the advantage only in nominal rank.' "

"I tell you what," replied Villeneuve, "I hate your country, its laws, its regulations, its inhabitants, and every living soul that ever belonged to it. You are a purse-proud, money-

making set of brokers, indebted to chance for your successes, and, with all your liberty, a set of overtaxed slaves."

"Very likely," I replied, "but we are secure as yet from our mobs and our tailors. If the Duke of Wellington were to die to-morrow, and rob England of her greatest glory, of her most staunch, unflinching, uncompromising conservative, do you think we should require* forty-seven thousand men to be under arms, accompanied by eighty-three pieces of heavy artillery, to protect the corpse ostensibly, or rather, to silence the murmurs of dissatisfaction which his enemies, or friends, might think proper to vent? Why, if one of your deputies gets shot in a duel, the national guards, the cavalry, the artillery, the line, are all kept under arms, from nine in the morning until ten at night, for fear your unsteady king should be dethroned; and

* When Monsieur Dulong was shot, and it was apprehended that the republican party might sing some miserable song, or indecorously toss up their hats, the government had under arms, and in readiness for service, the above number of troops. This is what they are pleased to call French liberty.

the papers call the military escort a proper 'respect to the dead.'"

"Oh!" replied Villeneuve, "these *émeutes* amount to nothing; ten or a dozen boys sing the Parisienne, and every now and then some slight demonstration in favour of a republic is made; but believe me, the better class of people are quite satisfied that no change will take place at present; and they rejoice at seeing the government so active, and giving such an earnest of what they are prepared to do upon an emergency. But you say you are ruined; now, out of sheer gratitude for your having made me your second, when you killed, or nearly killed, one of your countrymen, I will make you a rich man again; so dine with me to-day, and I will open my plan to you. But how much money have you left?"

"Not more than fourteen thousand francs," was my reply; "and when that is gone what am I to do?"

"A man talk of being ruined with fourteen thousand francs!" said Villeneuve, stopping short, and looking full in my face; "why,

you are a rich man; you have the foundation of a large fortune made. Meet me at the circle in the Palais-Royal, close to Very's, and I will conduct you to a restaurateur's afterwards. Good morning, *au plaisir*." Saying which he turned down the Rue Neuve St. Augustin, and left me to follow the bent of my own inclination.

I resolved to visit Banana, and, if possible, to get into the same *pension*. He was at home, but in a most violent rage, stamping and storming about his apartment; he had been employed packing up, and whenever he stopped in his volume of complaints, he continued his avocation. As for letting a servant either brush his hat or his coat, or pack up his clothes, or send his linen to the wash, he would as soon be decapitated. This bachelor custom of preserving *old habits* was strongly fixed upon my uncle, and if by accident he was splashed in the street, by no means a very uncommon circumstance in winter, he returned instantly home, dried the mud, and then, with a

light hand, for fear of brushing off the nap of the cloth, he cleaned his own clothes.

"My dear uncle," I began, "I am sorry to see you preparing to leave your present abode, in which I thought you were so comfortably established."

"Comfortably established! Robert, so I thought once; but just look at this paper sent to me to-day, and tell me what it means, for I cannot make head or tail of it. I am resolved to quit the apartment directly, or I shall be made one of the family, as you were made one of the partners of Plausible and Co. Here, read it; tell me what the devil I have to do with this."

I took the letter, which had the Paris post-mark upon it, and began to read aloud.

"Madame Gustave Jacques Foljambe, Monsieur et Madame Garcia, Monsieur et Madame Monier, Monsieur J. B. D. Beranger, Monsieur T. Beranger, Monsieur E. Beranger, Mrs. Ferdinand Foljambe, &c. &c. &c. et Messrs. les neveux, cousins, et cousines,

ont l'honneur de vous faire part de la perte douleureuse qu'ils viennent de faire en la personne de Monsieur Gustave Jacques Foljambe, leur époux, père, beau-père, gendre, frère, beau-frère, oncle et cousin, décédé le 14 Avril 1833, en sa demeure Rue St. Fiacre, No. 2, à Paris."

"Well," said I, as I finished, "if you can understand my pronunciation, I suppose you understand the letter, which, when shorn of all the names, amounts to this, that Monsieur Gustave Jacques Foljambe is dead, and that his relations think it right, on account of your intimacy with the family, to make you acquainted with the loss they have sustained."

"Curse them all, père, beau-père, gendre, frère, beau-frère, oncle and cousin, into one heap!" said my enraged uncle. "Do they want me to puddle through this mud, up to Père-la-Chaise, to see a person buried I never knew? Besides, I think it is a very great liberty to take with any man, to send him a letter by the post, and make him pay for what neither interests nor concerns him. I am off,

Robert, to a place where no one can find me—not even you; and I leave you my apartment. I would not stay one moment. I have told Miss Blondel where I intend to go, and she is the only one with whom I will confide the secret. I have paid one month in advance for my rooms, so take possession directly, and I am off."

"Surely, my dear uncle," said I, "you cannot be driven from your comfortable home, because a letter, which only cost three sous, is sent to you, and which you need not notice at all. Be content to remain, and I will find an apartment in the same house."

"Remain!" screamed poor Banana; "remain, to have the visits of ceremony of half-a-thousand Foljambes, a score of Berangers, and the Lord does not know how many Moniers and Garcias. Not I. To be obliged to pour out lamentations, and perhaps tears, for a person I never saw; or to be insulted because I hate going to a funeral! I never want any one to attend me to my grave but the bearers and the parson; and as for all my friends, I

leave them to read my will and share my money, which I make no doubt would be the most agreeable occupation of the two, and would be more amusing and satisfactory."

"Ah!" I replied, "if I could only have one Beranger to write the song, and one Garcia to sing it, I would go through the infliction of condoling with all the Foljambes left to annoy us here."

"What, you have not had enough of songs and books yet, Robert! Will you never buy your experience? Must you be eternally scribbling and wearing the author's livery, your foolscap uniform turned up with ink! Leave off all such nonsense: learn to be a gentleman, and relinquish the pen to those people who get a slender maintenance by their wits."

"I fancy, my dear uncle, I shall have to do that myself now, or starve."

"Then starve, Robert, and be another proof that death may save a man from damnation." Saying which, he flung himself into divers ridiculous postures, locked up his

trunks, called the porter, and saying, "I leave these rooms for you and yours," he departed.

This was my uncle all over. He had paid the one hundred and sixty francs, and added some trifling presents to the amount of five hundred more. He had liberally rewarded the servants of the establishment; but, directly he had three sous to pay for a letter, or that he fancied his abode was too generally known, away he went out of his house to seek a more secluded one, and again to be the victim of some knowing woman, or some artful knave. Any man who assumed the appearance of sorrow could impose upon his credulity, and was sure of relief; but he who held up the head of innocence, and braved the misfortunes of the world, would be coldly received, or inadvertently insulted. Such was the general outline of Banana's mind; but now he was to try his strength against an adversary with whom he had never properly encountered during the impetuosity of youth, or the heat of manhood. It was Love.

Banana had sworn that nothing on earth

should ever seduce him to marry. The very idea of settling money was a settler for him. He would give any token of affection but a bank token, and his natural antipathy to lawyers kept him clear of the mesh, until his sixtieth year, when the fascinations of Miss Blondel seemed to threaten his heart with an assault which even his determination was not likely to withstand.

To give Miss Blondel her due, she was a fine woman of thirty-five. Her hair, which had been during the love-exciting age of eighteen of an auburn colour, was now of a sandy distinction; but still it was plentiful, and Edmond, Vallati, and Hyppolite, were diurnally summoned to keep it in proper order. She was perfection as to simplicity and yet elegance of dress. Instead of the various colours of the parroquet's tail, she studied the unities, and always wore the appearance of a fashionable and well-educated woman; but to die an old maid was no part of her plan. Frequently had she made "the dead set" at a young man, but had always been foiled

Those who marry people much older than themselves, generally contrive to get a balance of gold in their favour; for it is unnatural for the youth at twenty to sigh for waning charms at thirty-five; and equally unnatural is it for the cold and frigid blood of sixty to cope with the fiery fluid of twenty. Love always seeks an equality, and true affection follows the well-assorted couple. We have the authority of the antient writers, that an equality of persons in regard to marriage does not mean equality of age; indeed, nothing can be more prejudicial to the continuance of affection than the union of two people of the same age. It is then the lively imagination of the woman is not likely to succumb to the as yet immatured judgment of the man; for women are plants of quicker growth, their maturity being placed at twenty, whilst that of the other sex is hardly decided until thirty-two. The Spartans never married until arrived at full maturity. Aristotle thought thirty-seven the proper age. Plato, who imagined the male part of the creation at full vigour of mind and body at

thirty, proposes that period, and in this he coincides with Hesiod.* In regard to women, Aristotle mentions eighteen as the mark, whilst Hesiod, who was an old man and ran a little into extremes, thought the tender and delicate age of fifteen as most inviting.† But in this cold region of the earth, where the buds scarce blossom until May, we may follow the opinion of Dr. Johnson, and say that the best period of life for marriage is thirty-five in the man, and twenty in the woman; then the man may fairly hope to see his children established in life before he quits it, and runs not the risk of being pushed from the world by his progeny before he is inclined to withdraw, (the which invariably happens if the man is but twenty or twenty-five when he marries,) or of leaving his children to the care of others, which he must expect, if he allows half a century to elapse

* When thirty years are pass'd of fleeting life,
Then think of taking to your arms a wife.

Oper. et Dier. lib. 2.

† The girl whom sooner marriage bliss invites,
At fifteen years is ripe for Hymen's rites.

HESIOD.

before he knows the most comfortable, nay, the only real enjoyment of life—that of domestic quiet and connubial happiness.

This digression is merely to show, that the misfortunes which followed Banana were of his own seeking. When a man is sixty, he had better take a mistress than a wife, or a nurse than either. The last is only paid as long as he lives.

CHAPTER VI.

Nec viduæ tædis eadem, nec virginis apta
Tempora; quæ nupsit, nec diuturna fuit.
Hac quoque de causa, si te proverbia tangunt,
Mense malas Maio nubere vulgus ait.

Nor maids, nor widows, in this month should wed,
If long they wish to press the marriage-bed.
The vulgar hence (if proverbs touch you) say,
The girls are good for nought, who wed in May.
Ovid, Fast. 1. 5 v.

The French capital is to some the most desirable residence in Europe. In Petersburgh, the aristocratic line of society is drawn with as much rigid regularity as in England; and in Vienna or Berlin, the stranger is obliged to make a certain show, if he mingles with that class to which every one aspires. But in Paris, at least since the Revolution of glorious memory, it is in the power of any gentleman, without being of noble blood, to share the blessings of

convivial and congenial society; from the magnificence of the Tuileries and the embassies, to the more social level of his own rank and station. It is this independence of the foolish shackles of fashion, which gives Paris the first place amongst all nations of the earth. It is immaterial whether your domicile is in the vicinity of the Place Vendôme, or half-way up the Boulevards de Poissonnières; no foolish distinction exists; the inhabitant of the Champs-Elysées, the Boulevards, the Rue Richelieu, the Rue St. Denis, or the Rue de Rivoli, are equally respected as long as they are equally respectable. No line of demarcation is drawn between the nobility and the gentlemen-commoners; and even in conversation the distinction is nearly obliterated, for in speaking to a nobleman he is never addressed by his title. That word *canaille* marks those who are inadmissible in society. The scrutiny which the establishment of a family resident in London must undergo from the prying curiosity of tattling age, is unknown in Paris; none but those haughty blockheads, those "tenth trans-

mittals of a foolish face," venture to object to visiting a neighbour, because he may be *au troisième*; the receiver-general of France lodges as near heaven. But we—we English, who boast of our nation, its laws, its habits, and its inhabitants, have done such irreparable mischief to that extended sociability, as to have built up a barrier, the which, as we are unable to pass over, we are now endeavouring to break through. Many years have not elapsed since the nobleman drove in his own carriage the hired ruffian of a public boxing-match, and thought himself exalted in the world's eyes, if by any accident he could be mistaken for his own coachman: he imitated his servant in his dress, and his boxing companion in his dialect. The *sprees* of the London mob were thought worthy of being held in admiration, and so admirably did the young noblemen of England succeed in their folly, that the following lines of an old song were strictly true:—

"A peer and a 'prentice are now so much the same,
That you cannot tell the difference excepting by the name."

Suddenly, however, convinced of the excessive

folly, and seeing that some of those public exhibitors had risen to their own level, the very noblemen who had cheered on the dogs to the hunt, became the first to seclude themselves from their former associates; they were again too cordially readmitted into the noble path from which they had swerved — and now as haughtily repulsed their inferiors, as they formerly courted and caressed them. No man can be free and familiar one moment, and haughty and reserved the next, without either exciting envy or contempt; the great misfortune is, that both of those bad feelings exist to the highest degree against the hand which once caressed, and now spurns its companion. The mischief was done; when the peer degraded himself to the level of a groom, the descent was easy; *sed revocare gradum*, that was the difficulty, and now it is felt and acknowledged. Day after day we see the sad march of revolution, the sighing for equality, the fixed resolution to share that which appears sacred. All that is great and good is reviled and scoffed at, —the crosier, the mitre, the coronet, and the

crown, all regarded as useless and unavailing: and the miserable hands, which, forty years back, were held up to support those great and proper establishments, are now stretching their greedy shrivelled fingers to snatch them from the brows of their once respected owners, and dash them to the earth. The fall will not be a partial one; if a union between the gentlemen commoners and the aristocracy does not take place, if those two do not blend into one, the truth of "the first shall be last, and the last shall be first," will be exemplified, and then for a revolution and national ruin and bankruptcy.

So far as France is concerned, the skilful hand of the present king seems to have ameliorated the condition of the people, without having placed them in a false position; the working classes have ceased to be clamorous on subjects they did not understand; and now that the horrors of starvation, the visitation of the cholera, and other misfortunes which followed the revolution have passed away, the people have generally returned to their former situations, and the whole aspect of the country

is that of prosperity. True it is that occasional *émeutes* occur, and that lives are occasionally sacrificed; but the excellent behaviour of the National Guards has tended more to destroy the hopes of the Republicans than even their muskets and bayonets. The generality of the people of Paris, although now convinced that in changing a dynasty, instead of hanging a ministry, they did a very foolish thing,—are more disposed to allow that foolish thing to remain, than again to risk the loss of national credit by a restoration. Louis-Philippe owes his throne to this idea.

It is almost impossible for an Englishman to visit France, and not view its progressing grandeur with an eye of envy: all their danger is passing, whilst ours is daily approaching; the credit of one country is increasing as the other is falling away; and every measure which insures the tranquillity of France, seems to be followed by one in England with just the contrary tendency. The French of the higher classes, having by experience found the inadequacy of a republican government, and having

seen the utter impossibility of success in regard to a counter-revolution, have either joined the present party, and become conservatives after a fashion, or have retired to live upon their own estates in quiet and domestic comfort. But amidst all the little turbulences, the country itself is making giant strides; and, as France once was, so will she shortly be again—the greatest among the nations of the earth. There may you live unscared by the tax-gatherer; he comes, it is true, but his requests are small. Here the tithes, the poor-rates, church-rates, parish-rates, are not rung in your ears from morning to night. The law and justice department is cheap and rigid, and quite absurd is the idea that cheap law makes people over-litigious; France is a living contradiction to the assertion. They have no fees of court, or rather, indirect taxation, to pay a pension. The improvements in the city of Paris are immense; the Madeleine at last opened, is a sight worthy of the traveller; the alterations in the streets, the sewers, the *trottoirs*, and the places of public amusement, meet the eye at every cor-

ner; and if the press is rather repressed, surely it is more beneficial to a state that insubordination and the promptings to revolt should be kept down, and national credit be respected, than that five or six people should gain a doubtful livelihood by circulating their seditious remarks.

A proposition might be made by which the power of the press would be totally annihilated, and yet the liberty of it preserved. It is this: an Act of Parliament that all leading articles should be written in the first person singular. It is the concealed "we," which does not exist, which occasions all the mischief. Ignorant people believe it to be the joint opinions of many clever men, whereas the inflammatory article is the production of one pen, and dictated by one head. Let the press teem with sedition, and who would heed it if it were known that the opinion on such a difficult point, was dictated by the wisdom of John Snob? who would not laugh at the abortive attempts of Simon Wilkins to stir up a revolution? and what has more completely brought the Register

into disrepute, than having the author's name affixed to it? Who cares one straw for the opinion of one man? But when we read the mysterious *we;* when we read—"*We* caution his Majesty's ministers to desist from pursuing the foolish course they have already begun; *we* warn them of the danger, and *we* call upon the people to resist the payment—the shameful payment of the assessed taxes,"&c.—only begin the sentence with "I caution his Majesty's ministers," &c., and place the signature of Peter Simkins at the end of it, and who would not scout the impertinent advice, or sneer at the foolish editor?

I beg the reader's pardon, I quite forgot I had to dispose of Banana.

Seated on a chair, for which two sous were paid, and close by the side of Miss Blondel, sat Mr. Banana, in the month of April, in the gardens of the Tuileries. The leaves on the chesnut-trees had already burst forth, and early as it was for such enjoyments, they were not alone in their pleasure; rows of chairs lined the different avenues, and thousands of people

were enjoying the beautiful day, so often known during the spring in Paris. Uncle Banana, as he lolled back in his chair, in order to stuff the off-ear with cotton to avoid a repetition of deafness from the breeze, held in his other hand a blue ribbon, to the end of which was attached Bijou, the favourite and well-taught poodle of the fascinating Miss Blondel. I suppose that six months previous to this exhibition, Banana would just as soon have eaten the dog as led him, and bitterly did the old gentleman curse the brute, and internally vow its destruction. Having stuffed his ear, he began with the vacant hand to rub off the dirt which the paw of Bijou had plentifully plastered on his brown surtout. Miss Blondel was looking at the company as they passed in review order before her; and, for five minutes at least, a strict silence was observed between the parties.

"You may let Bijou loose, my dear," said Miss Blondel, "but we must have him fast when we go out."

"There, run along, poor Bijou," said Ba-

nana, as he slipped off the ribbon and left the poodle in freedom; giving it, however, a degree of impetus by applying his boot not a mile from the dog's tail.

Bijou, unused to such disrespectful behaviour, growled his disapprobation.

"As the summer advances," said Miss Blondel, "these gardens become more pleasant: the rows of orange-trees contribute greatly to adorn that front walk; but they seldom appear until the end of May."

"I don't see any orange-trees," replied Banana, "I wish I could."

"No, not yet, my dear," continued Miss Blondel, "for until the perquisite is received the trees are never seen. It is customary to sell the orange-blossoms at three francs a pound in Paris, and six elsewhere, so that the revenue of the gentleman under whose care these trees are placed, makes a very comfortable income, and he never gives the public the trees until he has made his fruits of the blossoms."

"I should think," replied Baanna, "that the people who let out these chairs, although they

are men of straw, must have a pretty snug speculation of it; and I think it would be no bad investment, for the numbers who daily pay their two sous are, as the Americans say, pretty considerable."

"Yes, my dear Banana, but you forget that the poor old women who watch so narrowly the occupants of their property, pay no less than twenty thousand francs a-year to the king for the exclusive privilege of letting out the chairs, and in winter the profit is not very great."

"Pay it to the king!" said Banana, whose old-fashioned ideas of royalty were rather startled at the idea of paying anything to a king; "What, his majesty receive a sum like that from poor old women who have hardly anything to subsist upon? really, royalty is very poor in these days!"

"Poor enough, God knows!" replied the female politician. "The King of Sweden has the produce of his farm offered for sale in the public market-place. The King of Belgium did much the same kind of thing. King Otho

has nothing to sell, or he would be a competitor; and the King of the French lets out chairs. All the majesty that hedged a king, is broken down, and revolution and riot are the orders of the day. We shall live to see strange things yet, Mr. Banana, rely upon it, and our sons and daughters."

"Our what, Miss Blondel! our sons and daughters! What, are we to have more than one? Are we to have a whole nursery of squallers, a whole generation of brats sprawling about the drawing-room, a big boy eternally thrashing a bigger drum, a daughter with a doll in her arms, and the other four squalling in the next room; the wet-nurse saucy and not dischargeable, because the poor little soul would suffer, if she was either rebuked or dismissed; the whole house a bear-garden, with a host of children hallooing and laughing, whilst their aged father is sinking into his grave!"

"Dear Banana, cease this useless complaining; from the moment you told me that I was your heart's own choice, I am sure I anticipated being your heart's ease also. Perhaps we

may have a larger family than you might like, but when they grow up, independent of the wet-nurse, then you will feel yourself a thousand-fold more happy than in the solitary loneness of a bachelor, wielding, as Macbeth says, 'a barren sceptre.' How much more delightful is it, to hear the cheerful laugh of one's children, to feel we have an interest in life, than in all the moodiness of neglected age to sink into the grave, without the kind condolence of a friend, or the tender solicitude of a wife! Ah, Banana! you have lived already quite long enough to feel the wretchedness of solitude, to see the hours creep by when you would urge them on to midnight, to return to an apartment without an eye to cheer you, or an ear to listen to your intelligence; and, like a single tree on a desert island, be it ever so beautiful, there is no one to repose in its shade, or to cling to it for shelter. Of all lives, none is so truly pitiable as that of an old bachelor, and you ought," continued Miss Blondel, with a very winning smile, "to thank your fortunate stars that I have taken compassion on your

wretchedness.—Bijou! Bijou! where are you going? Do, my dear Banana, call the dog back, or some one will run away with it."

"I would to heaven," replied the bachelor, in a *sotto voce*, "that some kind, good creature, with equal solicitude for another's happiness, would pitch that curly-backed mongrel into the Seine," at the same time rising and endeavouring to establish a whistle.

Whilst Banana was *whewing* and everything else but whistling, a French gentleman seeing his object, caught the dog in his arms, and returned it to Banana, who, making a low bow, and thanking the courteous stranger for his civility, returned, and seated himself by his future wife.

"That was very civil, my dear Banana; I hope you thanked him for his trouble."

"Certainly I did," replied the testy gentleman rather sharply; "I dare say he would sooner have had a ten-sous piece than any expression of mine. Lord, how I hate them all!"

"I thought you were too much of a man of the world," continued Miss Blondel, "at any

rate, to express yourself so openly and undisguisedly; besides, the gentleman has the legion of honour, and is a very good-looking man with moustaches."

"And I will be bound for it calls himself a marquis at least, and, like other gentlemen of that nominal grade, has no more right to the rank than your dog Bijou. And as for the legion of honour, as you call the red ribbon sown on to the great coat, coat, and waistcoat of that poor old decrepid blockhead; why, you may find half the swindlers of Paris with it; it is like a German count—the worst travelling-distinction in Europe."

"I know they are very numerous, my dear, but that does not take away from their civility and attention."

"I tell you, Miss Blondel," said Banana, with much emphasis, "it is all a humbug from beginning to end; you fancy a Frenchman civil because he screws up his mouth, and softly articulates what you do not exactly understand; the women find out this attention, which men cannot discover. The fact is, they

are much bolder, much more impertinent, and much more pressing than Englishmen, and generally with a worse intention; they pay you compliments even in their stocks and stones, and you believe in their sincerity."

"I don't understand you, my dear Banana, what can you refer to in their stocks and stones?"

"Refer to!" said Banana, "why, without going very far, I will refer to the relief on the Madeleine, for which his majesty knighted the flatterer—and served him quite right too. Why you find all are women who go to heaven; and although one or two are jammed in with the men, who are destined to another place, yet this is the compliment conveyed, that *you do* go up there, whilst our sex, and thank God, Monsieur Lemaire in the company, are not fit associates for such ready-made angels, and are thus exhibited as everything that is bad, in contradistinction to everything which is good."

"Well, I am sure," replied the lady, "I hope he is right, and I thank him for the delicacy of the compliment."

"As for the delicacy of the whole concern, I don't think much of that, Miss Blondel; only look where they have placed the head of the Madeleine, and talk about delicacy;* but it is in consideration, I hope, for the injury mankind received by our first mother listening to a serpent."

"But, after all your criticism, you must allow it to be a splendid edifice."

"Of its kind," resumed Banana, "the finest thing in the whole world: when the few irregular houses which obstruct the view from the Place de la Concorde are pulled down, the flower-market arranged, and the steps of the church finished, it will be unrivalled in Europe."

"Then you do give them credit for something after all. And what do you think of the Egyptian pillar which is to stand in commemoration of a royal murder?"

* Two French women who were passing their opinions on the relief above-mentioned, heard an English gentleman make the remark, to which this is the note. The elder one immediately said, "They had better have stuck to the leaf, or if they gave that up, they might have tried a napkin.

"Why, I think it was not worth the trouble of sending for; it obstructs the view of the Tuileries from the Champs-Elysées, and is, after all, no very pleasant sight, either close or at a distance. But let us, my dear Mary, speak of something else, which the mere mention of that pillar recalls to my mind, and which has been too long neglected."

"Oh dear!" replied Miss Blondel, "I am sure—Bijou! Bijou! oh, where is that nasty dog gone? Indeed, Mr. Banana, the place is so public, and the gardens are quite crammed with our countrymen; everyone speaks English near us: do postpone the question. I am sure I shall be very willing at any other time. What a charming day it is for the season of the year!"

Banana, who was the hazy side of sixty, and who had got over all the tender feelings of youth and the modesty of woman, could not imagine why Miss Blondel should be so mightily moved at the name of a pillar; and being one of those cool men who go straight towards a given point, without swerving in the least de-

gree, excepting when he told an anecdote, took no notice whatever of the wanderings of Bijou, nor heeded the warning voice of English; he spoke right out, and taking Miss Blondel's hand, begged she would name the day on which they were to be married.

My uncle was a man who could not disguise his feelings; he was wound up to the mark; it was the spring of the year, and that which reinvigorated trees, seemed to reinvigorate him; the sap was rising, if not up. He sat cross-legged, his eyes flashing as much fire as the dimmed blaze of sixty could emit; he had seized her hand, and looking with more than friendly gaze upon the momentary idol of his heart, he again repeated in a louder strain the ominous question of, "when his fate was to be sealed?"

A slight titter from one or two ladies might have convinced him that his was a delicate situation, but the whispers of the angels would have passed unheeded. Miss Blondel replied, with a wonderful deal of agitation and apparent maiden modesty, "That she was ready to sur-

render herself up to her husband directly all the preliminary arrangements were settled."

That word *settled* was the electric spark to Banana; immediately a cloud of thoughts rushed over his worried brain. "Settlements!" said he to himself; "parchment, stamps, attorneys! place my own money out of my own power! if she is unfaithful, still obliged to maintain her!"—and thus he allowed the gentle current of his good-humour to become a little turbid and distracted.

"For the matter of the settlement," said Banana, "it is a point upon which little need be said. Your own money, of course, will be settled upon yourself, and I shall have great pleasure in adding about five or six thousand pounds more; you will have the power of disposing of your own in any way you think best, and I am determined no one shall ever say that I married with the idea of increasing my fortune."

"My dear sir," replied the lady, "you are always just and generous, and I am sure I should be acting very improperly if I did not

meet your views in every way; therefore, when you have arranged all the preliminary affairs, I shall" (and here the lady blushed and hung down her head) "be ready to fix a day for the marriage."

"That must be done now," said Banana; "at my age, although I never felt better or stronger in my life, a day is more than a month when at the age of twenty. Upon me falls the responsibility of getting these foolish settlements made, which are nothing more than so many doubts upon the honour of the man; and I pledge myself to see those properly drawn up, and the money in the hands of trustees, if you will consent to be married on the 15th of May. I have a strange partiality for that day. We are now in April, and there is sufficient time for all the necessary arrangements."

The shyness and coyness of Miss Blondel had considerably evaporated, and after asking what day of the month it was, and calling back remembrance, as appeared by her countenance, she repeated the 15th of May four or five

times, and then hanging her head down like a lily in a storm, she consented on that day to change her name and become his lawful wife.

"We will keep it a secret, Mary," said the amorous bachelor; "not a soul shall know it: we will have no public signal of your expected happiness; no foolish parade of favours, or of breakfasting; but we will quietly go to the ambassador's, and there unite our hearts and hands, and endeavour to be happy for the remaining number of years we are destined to live."

So ended this memorable conversation; Bijou was taken in the arms of Banana, clear of those warlike sentinels who are placed to prevent the entrance of dogs, beggars, women with handkerchiefs round their caps, or bonnets, even if it rains; and to the exclusion of all men, women, or children carrying either book, bag, or baggage. It is a laudable service for the National Guard and the soldiers of the line, to be seen poking at a poodle with a fixed bayonet, or chasing the liberated animal from the hallowed precincts of the Tuileries: but such is the fact, and the service is sufficiently exciting

to make all shopkeepers and respectable inhabitants shoulder a firelock and dress in uniform. Much good may such buffoonery do them!

It is, perhaps, requisite for the sequel of my story, to mention, that although Miss Blondel thus gave her hand to my amorous uncle, yet her heart was in the possession of a French gentleman, who had a pair of moustaches long enough to answer the same purpose as a cat's whiskers; namely, to ascertain if there was sufficient room for the body to follow the head: indeed, the simile might be carried farther, for, divest either man or cat of its moustaches, and neither could have secured their prey. Reports had already rather thrown suspicion upon the virtue of the lady, but if these had ever reached the deaf ears of her future husband is unknown: very certain I am, that he would have discredited the report; for he was slow to indulge in any bad feeling against any one alive, although daily plundered and daily deceived, yet the inveteracy of general honesty was so fixed in his mind, that sixty long years

had not been sufficient to convince him of the fallacy of his belief. The fact was, that the lady found it quite requisite to be married, and had Banana fixed a much earlier day, she would not have opposed his wishes. 'That coming events do cast their shadows before,' we all know; but at the moment to which I allude, although the coming event was certain, yet it was not discernible. The lover never appeared during the period which elapsed between that day's conversation and the nuptials, and Banana had not the slightest suspicion but that his future wife was a paragon of perfection.

"I tell you, my dear," said Banana, as he walked up the Rue Castiglione and approached the Place Vendôme, "that I expect this business to be kept quite a secret. I do think there is a certain indelicacy in publishing to the whole world that a marriage is to be consummated. I believe there must be one or two witnesses present; but as for a host of visiters to remark how one appears before execution, to listen if each word is properly pronounced, and to in-

terrupt the ceremony, which is long enough without interruption, by crying or coughing, is what I cannot brave. The day is fixed, on Wednesday the 15th of May you are to be mine: you may have one attendant, a bridesmaid, and I will have my servant and my nephew. We will afterwards live in my lodgings, which I shall prepare in a suitable manner, and to which you had better send your clothes and your band-boxes, your parrot and your canary-bird; and after the ceremony, you and Bijou can walk over the bridge to the Rue de l'Université."

Miss Blondel seemed scarcely to heed the words of her future husband, but said, "Very well—very well, my dear, as you like. I am sure I do not wish any foolish show; I am quite contented to leave the whole affair to be managed by you, and therefore shall only busy myself about my own concern, which is to buy my wedding-dresses."

"Wedding-dresses, Miss Blondel! What are you going to bedizen yourself out in silks and satins, with white bonnets, bouquets, and

blond? Are you going to walk to the embassy like one of the dancing-women round the Jack-in-the-Green on May-day, to have half Paris beating the marrow-bones and cleavers at our tails? What stuff! Wedding-dresses! as if a person was any the better for having a new dress, or any the more chaste for having a white one. Besides, we shall have money after money to pay. Whereas, if we are married, for instance, just as we are now, you in that nice silk cloak and black bonnet, and I in this brown surtout—I tell you, I have worn this colour for forty years, and would not change it for all the fashions of France, and I fancy a man may be married in any dress — there can be no law against that: there is no act of parliament for the length of a man's coat in matrimony, whatever else may be required."

"One must conform a little, my dear Banana, to the world's ways. The reverend divine, who knows our situation in life, would hardly like to see us married in our walking-dresses."

"Poh, poh!" spluttered the testy bachelor: "what do I care for the world?"

"Oh," replied Miss Blondel, "Hudibras remarks—

> 'Let it, says he, be what it will,
> It has the world's opinion still.'

"A fig for the world's opinion, and that fellow who wrote the book in the bargain! I cannot control you; but I can express my wishes on the subject. I shall be at my post, in my walking-dress, and you may consult your own feelings. Here is your house. Good bye, good bye!"

Miss Blondel entered the great gates, and turning round, kissed her hand twice, and smiled most benignantly.

Banana now set to work to arrange the settlements, which were anything else but legal; but his word was worth all the legal documents in the world. He had said that he would settle so much; he added a codicil to his will to that effect the instant he got home, so that had he died before the marriage, Miss

Blondel would have had her settlement without her husband. It required but little time to arrange the business; but when Banana went to the gentleman who prepares the licences, it was hinted to him, that, if he chose to pay twenty francs, the servants of the embassy would not molest him, or rather, would not appear on the day of the marriage. It so happened that Banana was in one of his stingy moments, and declared he would not lend himself to any such sinecure upholding. "They will have too much to do to bother me," he replied, "and twenty francs is exorbitant, — a kind of premium upon laziness. If I paid twenty francs for their all dressing in their full liveries to attend at the door, I should think it fair enough; but to give money for a non-attendance, that," quoth he, "is only required by an attorney, and certainly I am not the man to pay it." Saying which he withdrew, having, as he thought, done a wonderfully clever thing, and made a wonderfully quick remark.

Very differently did Miss Blondel employ herself. To keep the secret was no part of her

plan. She whispered it to one, hinted it to another, was apparently reserved with a third, and consulted the fourth as to the best dressmaker. Victorine cut the gowns too low on the back; Madame Hosé made them too full before; Le Roi was not happy in her fit; Madame Boudin was too uncertain as to time and success, and Madame Palmyre was altogether too expensive. Still Paris afforded quite a sufficiency of female plunderers, and one not quite so vexatiously voracious as the last-named, and equal in ability and fashion to her, was chosen; and before the day, about fourteen different dresses were spread about her room, and every acquaintance she ever had in the world was invited to see her in all her splendour, and thus to call forth all the envy and the malice of her sisterhood. The bills were, of course, unpaid; and, as the lady followed the folly of the day, of giving away all her old linen and buying all new,—a folly so preposterously absurd as scarcely to be credible, for it implies that the lady had not a rag fit to wear,—those delightful annoyances were

swelled to a very considerable amount. Banana sent her a necklace of some value, and had prepared one or two other presents worthy of his Oriental munificence, intended as a surprise for the lady, when she and Bijou should have passed the bridge after the nuptials.

In the mean time the day grew near, and Banana became more impatient and fidgety than ever. An awful step, even at sixty, is marriage; and for a young man of two-and-twenty, the greatest hazard of his whole life; for in the days of courtship, when the heated blood of youth fevers into anxiety, then the calm voice of reason is unheeded, and the object fancied beyond the grasp, and therefore, more desired from the difficulty of obtaining it, keeps entire control over the imagination. Then are the counsels of those, whose experience has been dearly bought, ridiculed and despised. The first years of marriage past, there remains no spur for ambition or emulation, then love gradually grows less and less, until, as in many cases, the foolish boy scruples not to seek happiness in other enjoy-

ments, and flies from one, now too closely his to be severed, either to the excitement of the gaming-table, or the amusements of public exhibitions.

Of all follies none is greater than the retirement so fashionable during the *treacle* moon, as Lord Byron called it. To place two young people in such solitude as to be entirely dependant upon one another is absurd; and in many cases, before the letters of congratulation have ceased to arrive, it becomes to the victims anything else than a subject for such expressions.

In Sweden, when a marriage occurs, the nearest akin gives the first entertainment, and it is followed by the different branches of the family in rotation, according to their affinity of relationship. The young people are at once forced, as it may be, into society, and from the continued round of visiters and amusements, they are pleased to steal a minute's solitude; whereas, in the honey-moon expedition, the arrival of a stranger or a friend is like provisions thrown unexpectedly into a half-starved

garrison. Even the newspaper, however vapid its intelligence, or however contrary in politics, is a guest not easily dispensed with. It was a question of astonishment with a very learned man, how Adam and Eve got through the twenty-four hours; and it was likewise the remark of a great wit, that if heaven was anything like the description of Paradise, he had no desire to crowd the fortunate by his presence.

Banana had long determined he would have no honey-moon folly. He considered his marriage as a necessary evil; he had been seduced into a declaration of his affections, more from having no other society, than from having been fascinated with Miss Blondel's, and in a rather unguarded moment he had gone too far to retract. He was going headlong over a precipice; but he had pledged himself to the leap, and he never broke his word. He was, as has been seen, in no hurry to make the business public: firstly, because he always had expressed his decided conviction that he never would marry; and secondly,

because he considered publicity in private affairs very indecent and improper.

Miss Blondel was not going to slip unperceived from her spinster associates,—not she. Her dear friend, Mrs. Handicraft, who was a very leaky vessel as to secrecy, had quietly whispered the event to about one dozen of her most intimate acquaintances, and these tattling darlings had retailed the circumstances to such a number of others, that before a week had elapsed, the anecdotes and the news returned, like the branches of the banyan-tree, back to the mother which gave them birth. Miss Blondel was determined to have some little *éclat* at her marriage. She was not going to be smuggled into the pale of the holy state, as if she were ashamed of the deed; and she therefore contrived to persuade Mrs. Handicraft to give a grand *dejeuné à la fourchette*, which Miss Blondel promised to pay for, as soon as Banana was within her grasp.

From the very cautious manner that Banana prowled about, and his anxious care to avoid any one he happened to know, he was quite

in ignorance of the honour that awaited him; and on the morning of his wedding he made not the slightest alteration in his dress, he being habited in drab inexpressibles—not a bad name for his wife—a yellow waistcoat striped with black, in the groom fashion, and quite proper, as he was to enact that part; a brown surtout, which had never been under the brush of a servant, for he had always brushed his own coats; a pair of Antwerp boots safely imported from Java, a dingy-coloured pair of gloves, and a broad-brimmed beaver. In one hand he carried a cotton umbrella, and in the other he had a paper parcel, in which was a valuable present for the bridesmaid, and too large to be put in his pocket: this being as a kind of precaution against suspicion, for, had Banana imagined for one moment that any one knew he was going to be married, he never could have screwed his courage to the sticking-post. His lodgings were in the Rue de l'Université, and he had four days successively walked at an easy pace from his house to the embassy, in order to know the exact time it required to make good the

distance; making allowances for finding an omnibus in the way, or a *fiacre* dragging its miserable length over the crossing he might have to pass. It took exactly twenty-two minutes and a half, passing over the Pont Royal, crossing the Tuileries into the Rue Rivoli, and so by the Rue des Champs Elysées into the Rue St. Honoré, the embassy, as everybody knows, being in the Faubourg St. Honoré. I was desired to be in attendance at half-past eleven, but my uncle, in his hurry, had not mentioned where; and as I was as innocent as a baby of the scene I was about to witness, for he never had told me one word of his intended marriage, I concluded I was to meet him at his own house; and accordingly, at eleven, I left my lodgings in the Rue Louis le Grand, and proceeded through the Marché St. Honoré towards the Tuileries. Banana left his lodgings about seven minutes and a half after his watch, regulated for the occasion, had passed the eleventh hour, calculating to arrive to the very moment, in order to have no delays, and to get over the business as quietly and as rapidly

as possible. It was a windy, gusty day, blowing very hard in the squalls, and occasionally making a considerable exhibition as to ladies' legs. Banana started upon the fair and softly system; he was determined to be cool and collected upon this occasion, and in order not even to be suspected, he gazed upon the muddy Seine as it rushed through the arches of the bridge, looked at the long line of floating baths, then gazed on the palace, with the extensive building of the Louvre, and lifting his hat, which was a tight fit, he seemed to ponder over the mutability of all earthly grandeur and enjoyment. "There," said he to himself, "reposed the bigoted Charles X., who had neither courage nor energy sufficient to withdraw an edict or fight for a crown,—a man, like his namesake of Spain, (only wanting his valour,) who took to counting beads, and resigned his kingdom. How long will the family of his successor revel in the Tuileries! how long will the usurpers——"

"Pardon, Monsieur," said he, as he ran bolt against a black man carrying charcoal, and

which left him another subject, the ashes of the grate, to ponder upon, as he kept brushing his coat with his sleeve, still edging onwards at the accustomed slow pace.

He had passed the bridge, and turned to the left, intending to enter the Tuileries; but just as he was planting his leg in the garden, a fierce-looking fellow, in the garb of the National Guard, stood before him, and announced that he could not pass that way as he had a parcel in his hand. A kind of hiccup of surprise followed the notice, and Banana actually endeavoured, in spite of the sentinel, to make good his way; when a soldier of the line, who had been placed to watch the national guardsman—they being under mutual surveillance—placed his musket before the protuberant front of my uncle with such force as to insure a retreat. A squall of wind unfortunately whistled round the angle of the palace at that moment, and the broad-brimmed beaver was blown from my uncle's head; and after making one or two very unsatisfactory bounds through mud and mire, it got fairly established upon its brim,

and ran away along the terrace like a school-boy's hoop.

A shout of laughter followed this unexpected misfortune; in vain Banana pointed to his hat, which was twirling away and nearly out of sight; quite in vain he used his best pronunciation to gain a listener; the sentinels turned deaf ears to his solicitations, whilst a pack of boys ran after the hat, laughing and hallooing in the most unchristianlike style. To leave the parcel with the soldiers then struck him; at first they refused the charge, but afterwards consented to receive it. Banana, enraged beyond all conception, threw it on the ground, and prepared to follow his hat, when the soldier of the line again interposed, and intimated to my uncle that no person was or could be admitted with his head uncovered.

"He has a wig," said a malicious urchin, "so his head is covered."

Banana looked round as a tiger does when a man in security pulls his tail. The whole mob burst out in a roar of laughter, when my uncle, not knowing the danger of betraying his own

secret, implored the sentinel to let him pass, as he was about to be married, and the bride was waiting his arrival. A devilish grin was to be seen on every face. His time had expired; the sentinels were inexorable, when luckily a little lad most civilly disposed, who had first kicked, and then caught the hat, gave it to my uncle, none the better for its roll, or more becoming from its indentures. He was now left to his choice either to go through the Place Carousel, where he might meet a *fiacre*, or by the Place de la Concorde, where he certainly would not meet one. Yet the latter was the shorter way, the pavement was, for Paris, good; and for once, without standing wavering for an hour, he clapped his umbrella under his left arm, put the parcel in his right hand, and making the best of his hat, advanced at a quick pace along the Quai, followed by about a dozen ragged boys, one or two shrill females, with the usual French accompaniment of yelping dogs. Of this latter domestic animal, be it known, there is hardly a family, however poor, that has not one belonging to the esta-

blishment. Away went Banana, with a larger Political Union than ever formed the tail of an agitator.

At the embassy, Miss Blondel, most splendidly arrayed, had, with Mrs. Handicraft, and the two Miss Popkins, safely arrived. About sixteen ladies of the former's slight acquaintance had also made their appearance, and the outside of the great gates seemed blocked up with fiacres; whilst in the court-yard the hired carriage of the bride stood quite alone in solitary grandeur. However, not one man besides the reverend divine and his clerk was present. The throne-room had been prepared for the occasion. Before the arms of royalty, and the seat of its representative, was a table on which were various papers and books; two foot-stools for the bride and bridegroom were placed in the centre of the room, which was terminated by a curtain, which the curiosity of the females soon managed to draw so as to discover the long ball-room, with all the chairs, seats, sofas, &c. crowded together like old furniture at a pawnbroker's. The clergyman

was there wondering at the delay; the bride was anxious for her future husband's arrival. The conjectures of females were loudly expressed, and Miss Blondel had made herself quite ready to faint, and had looked out for a convenient place to go through the operation. She held her embroidered handkerchief by the centre, leaving the four corners to hang down like the leaves of the chesnut-tree, the day after they have started into existence; in fact, she had picked up quite sufficient of fashion's follies, which was plainly exemplified in her dress and manner. Her associates wondered at the uncommon procrastination; half an hour had passed; conjecture was at its highest, and some began to whisper that Mr. Banana had hit the blot, which scandal had long surmised, and which would not lose much by passing over the tongues of those disgracefully idle loungers who wander about the streets to get rid of themselves, and who think no more of sacrificing a woman's virtue, be she ever so virtuous, then they do of spunging upon an acquaintance for either money or a dinner.

Of such vermin we have had our full share; but perhaps the most insolent of all their behaviour is the self-constituted judgeship, of how much or how little a lady should smile when she walks in public; the exact line of dress which is to cover an exact height of shoulder, or how often a girl's eye may fall with impunity even on her brother. Fortunately the loathsome reptiles who emit the poison, are generally too insignificant to be noticed, or too silly to be credited.

Banana had got forward at a good pace, until about the corner of the Rue des Champs Elysées, which turns into the Faubourg. Here he met with an omnibus, the driver of which kept his wheels in the gutter, and besprinkled the foot-passengers merely for amusement. In endeavouring to avoid this rain of mud, Banana's foot slipped, and he fell down; and those who have ever had the misfortune to do the same in Paris, may imagine that he was none the cleaner for his tumble. He instantly thought of returning home, and would have done so, had not the boys in his rear shouted and

hooted, and danced like savages round their victim. He, however, got into a shop, and managed to divest himself of some of the mud and mire. His hat was set a little to rights, and although very far from being a spruce bridegroom, yet was he far better as to appearance than if he had rushed into the church as he did into the shop. His temper was seriously ruffled; he was in a situation by no means enviable, and his friends the boys hung upon his rear like the greedy cloud of Cossacks on the retreat of the great army.

CHAPTER VII.

"Marriage, rightly understood,
Gives to the tender and the good
A paradise below."

When I arrived at my uncle's, the man-servant expressed his surprise that I should have mistaken the rendezvous, and hinted at the same time that the house was prepared for the reception of madame, whom he expected shortly to take possession; but when he finished by asserting that Banana had actually set forward to be married, I sent him instantly for a cabriolet, and jumping therein, hastened to the embassy, arriving before my uncle, and monstrously surprised at the display of silks and satins, and the sixteen ladies who stood

with eager eyes ready to welcome the bridegroom. To all the questions I could give no answer, excepting that Banana had actually started on the matrimonial voyage; but, if wrecked on his way, or out of his reckoning in his navigation, I knew no more than Miss Blondel, who waved the four corners of her worked pocket-handkerchief in a manner expressive of both grief and surprise.

It was decided that I should venture to the door in order to keep a look-out for the Unfortunate Man; and scarcely had I taken up a position to reconnoitre the approach, when I heard a loud shout of laughter and boyish hurrahs, and suddenly my uncle turned through the great gates, pale with rage, and so overcome by anger and vexation as scarcely to be conscious of his actions. The bell at the porter's lodge conveyed the news to a servant in waiting, and before my uncle could reach the door, eight men, dressed in buff turned up with red liveries, were standing in a line; and as the enraged bridegroom passed the threshold, they all bowed their heads, and mur-

mured a wish for his happiness. The exhibition of eight ghosts, had he murdered their realities, could not have startled him more. He looked at them with an absent stare, and scarcely heeded the voice of the principal attendant as he led the way to the throne-room, and begged my uncle to follow him. He passed me close, looked at me, but hardly seemed to recognise me, and brushing onwards, with his nephew closely following, passed through an outer room into a conservatory, which led directly to the throne-room. The ladies had crowded together in the centre, and were uninformed of the bridegroom's arrival, until he gave vent to an expression of surprise, in finding himself so gloriously received, by the exclamation of one loud "Damnation!" The whole company trembled; the ladies thought a madman had broken into the sanctuary, and fell back, leaving the bride in advance, and the nearest to her husband. The wild air of my uncle, his dress so unusual on such occasions, a large parcel, and an umbrella, dirty gloves, splashed clothes, and morning-

dress, ill became the fancied propriety of a spruce bridegroom. Even Miss Blondel looked scared, and the clerk opened his mouth, after gazing with all the vacancy of an idiot, and the lips closed with pronouncing "Amen." Brydone gives an account, in his amusing work on Sicily, of his having on the feast of St. Rosalia suddenly entered the cathedral at Palermo, and, from the vivid blaze of unexpected light, having become perfectly senseless. The same cause, only the dazzle of woman's eyes being substituted for that of the candles, produced a similar effect upon my uncle. He stood with his left foot forward, as if he had made the first movement to march, but had halted in his pace, and in his intentions. Both arms were a little advanced from the body, which made a slight deviation from the perpendicular; his eyes were fixed upon the bride; his lips a little open, and a kind of convulsive twitch animated his almost deadened countenance. He resembled Bartolo in the "Barber of Seville," when the guards, instead of arresting, salute the Count Alma-

viva, although in the garb of a common soldier. I sneaked into the room, and placed myself against a pillar near the curtain before-mentioned.

"You are very late," commenced the bride, "my dear Banana. What could have happened?"

"Happened!" responded Banana, looking quite aghast, and keeping his mouth wide open, like an alligator catching flies. "Happened! Look there," said he, pointing to the crowd of people. "Look there."

"There!" said Miss Blondel, who fancied that my uncle saw a ghost by daylight. "There! why I see nothing but your friends come to witness the marriage. Don't you know Mrs. Handicraft?"

"That I do right well," said my uncle, recovering a little, and making a slight inclination.

The crowd now saw that the bridegroom was not exactly mad, but only a little strange; and they soon, as they thought of the *déjeûné*, began to dissipate their fears, and drawing

near to the amorous pair mentioned that any further delay was useless. I stepped forward and took the umbrella and the parcel, whilst Mrs. Handicraft advanced my poor dear devoted uncle into the centre of the room; and after I had deposited the lumber in a corner, I stood forward as the right-hand and only man on the side of my uncle. The Misses Popkins, in bonnets of pink satin outside, lined with black velvet, and trimmed with ditto, wearing a dark brown watered silk dress, ornamented with "orange flowers" and "forget me nots," with black satin shoes to match, stood close to the blushing bride, with their flags of abominations held by the centre, and ready and willing to weep when the leader should commence. The bride was elegantly attired. She wore a worked muslin dress, richly trimmed with Brussels lace, over a white silk slip; a crape bonnet with white feathers, having a deep fall of lace, with a branch of orange flowers across the front of the inside; white satin shoes, enclosing a pretty and a well-formed little foot.

The clergyman who was to officiate and make Banana really unfortunate, was a very young man, and very little used to this ceremony. He was requested by Miss Blondel to do this last act of kindness for her, and he stood now ready and willing to commence. Banana paid great attention to the service, which is beautiful as to composition: he looked as resigned as a lamb at the slaughter, and although very much agitated, never once lifted his eyes from the floor. He answered the question of "Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife?" with firmness. The words "*I will*" were pronounced in a manner which proved the victim to have wound himself up to desperation. But when the young uniter of hands and hearts said, "Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?" there was a dead halt. Mrs. Handicraft offered to give the bride away; but her friendly offer in this instance was unavailing, as the clergyman declared that it must be a man, and of age, to give away the lady. It was mentioned also, in a whisper, which the awful ceremony seemed

to command, that I could not give away the lady, as in that case there would not be sufficient witnesses to the marriage

"What is to be done, sir?" said the half-wedded Miss Blondel.

"Really, madam," said the coxcombical clergyman, "I hardly know; unless you could persuade one of the servants, or send to the office for one of the *attachés*. I cannot proceed unless some one gives you away. I should be liable to a heavy censure, which I am not prepared to encounter; besides which, the marriage would not be legal."

Banana recovered mightily during this whisper—he seemed to imagine that he could slip from the noose now round his neck; but he was mistaken; for at the very moment when the clergyman whispered, the Misses Popkins whispered, Mrs. Handicraft whispered, and the throne-room was more like an enclosure for geese, than representing a church. The door opened, and a very handsome, tall, militarv kind of Frenchman with moustaches entered, and advanced immediately towards the bride.

Banana recognised the obliging gentleman who had restored the wandering Bijou to his arms. Miss Blondel recognised the object of her affection, and the man whom she had invited to witness her fortunate union; and I, for I was but too well acquainted with him then, the Viscomte de Villeneuve. When his eyes met mine, the colour forsook his cheeks; he recovered himself instantly, but Miss Blondel looked horror-stricken when she perceived that I was acquainted with the stranger. When informed of the difficulty, he very kindly volunteered to stand father to the bride, and the service proceeded, and terminated by the former Miss Blondel becoming Madame Banana.

When the ceremony was concluded, the first thing Banana heard and saw, was the whiskered Frenchman saluting Mrs. Banana in a very friendly, parental, and rather affectionate manner; and his jealous disposition, ever ready to take fire, was not slow to kindle upon this first aggression. He attempted to smile, but it was no time for laughter: the lover, who thus saw his mistress safe from any future con-

sequences, was in high frolicsome humour, and as he relinquished the closely-pressed hand of the bride, endeavoured to encircle Banana in his friendly embrace. Banana backed towards the door with a face indicative of horror, for in all his career of life he had evinced a delicacy which was never surpassed: he held the act of saluting a lady as rather beyond the precincts of his hallowed delicacy; but for one man to rub his cheeks and pout his lips against either the cheeks or the lips of another man, he held it so unnatural, so disgusting, so truly offensive, that he would have suffered any ridicule rather than have faced it. Villeneuve saw his game—the marriage party, dull before, were now laughing at the imploring face of Banana as he endeavoured to avoid his utter detestation; he dodged round the pillar, but was not active enough to escape his pursuer, who ultimately seized him in his embrace and kissed my poor uncle about a dozen times, he writhing to escape, and perfectly regardless that his wig had been elevated in the scuffle. The laugh was long and indecently loud, but Banana did

not laugh, and never did a bridegroom wear so sullen a countenance as the Unfortunate Man, when he plainly articulated, "Dirty, disgusting, unnatural custom, which only bears and Frenchmen would submit to!"

He was called from the ridicule to sign his death-warrant, which was scarcely legible, and I added, very unwillingly, my attesting signature to the marriage. Thus was Banana, after having arrived at the hazy side of sixty, duped into matrimony; his life, which throughout, as may have been seen, was a life of trifling misfortunes, magnified by his naturally restless manner, was now to become one of real grief. The little vexations which elderly gentlemen of bachelor habits are likely to encounter, may easily be borne without repining; but when once a man has allowed himself to be overcome by the trivial misfortunes of life, he is very little calculated to stand the fierce attack of adversity, or to face those discoveries which bring to light perfidy, ingratitude, and crime.

"My dear," said Mrs. Banana as she took his hand, "Mrs. Handicraft has provided a

déjeûné, and we must lead the way to her house; will you, *Robert*, call the carriage? Monsieur le Viscomte, are we to have the honour of your company?" (the Frenchman bowed assent.) "Now, ladies," said the bride in a laughing tone, "I regret that we have so few gentlemen to escort you, but perhaps you can find your way to Mrs. Handicraft's."

The carriage being announced, Banana assumed the husband, and offering his arm to his wife, they moved along the conservatory, followed by the whole company. The eight servants had grown into about eighteen; they bowed and scraped, and wished the bride happiness, and very plainly asked for something to drink her health and future enjoyment.

"Certainly," said the bride, at the same time requesting her friend the Viscomte to give them each five francs, which he promised to do.

Banana thus found, that had he given twenty francs at the proctor's, he would have saved seventy francs at the embassy. The marriage is the bride's day—until daylight the

next morning she may have all her requests granted, and all her wishes accorded.

No sooner was Banana in the carriage and the door shut, than he called out to stop, and begged that I would bring him his umbrella and his parcel, which being given to him, the fortunate bride and happy bridegroom drove to Mrs. Handicraft's, followed by half the boys and idlers of the town, who hurrahed and shouted most lustily. Here again was another annoyance; every one, from the *entresol* to the *seizième*, knew that a bride was to be feasted in the house, and as Mrs. Handicraft lived *au second*, and the *premier* was habited by a milliner, all the little work-girls were assembled on the first landing-place, and expressed their remarks quite audibly, making several allusions to the beauty of the bride, and the dirty, negligent appearance of the husband.

"*Oh Dieu! quel horreur!*" said one; "*En redingote!*" said another; "*Vieux comme le monde!*" said a third; and scarcely had they left the distinct remarks of "*blasé, fané,*" &c., behind, than they were saluted with nearly the

same civility from all the maids above, who, peeping over the banisters, indulged their curiosity and their impertinence at the same time.

When Banana got fairly hid from the titters and the smiles of the girls, he found, to his horror, a table spread for about thirty people; there seemed to be every preparation for a most glorious repast; but he felt grateful, although dissatisfied, at the expense Mrs. Handicraft must have gone to in order to make him uncomfortable. Perhaps there is no more painful situation in life than a naturally shy and reserved man finding himself the object of remark to every one within hail of him; he is sure to become more nervous, and equally sure to become more ridiculous. By degrees the company assembled; a sufficient number of men had been kindly invited to keep the table even, and when the whole twenty were arrived, the *déjeûné* was served after the following manner.

The bride was placed on the right hand of the Viscomte de Villeneuve, whilst Mrs. Handicraft occupied the left seat of honour.

Banana faced his better half, his countenance expressive of thoughtful agony, which I had full leisure to remark, as he was nearly opposite to me, I being placed on the right hand of the bride. This *déjeûné* was not to be a kind of half-and-half trash affair; Mrs. Handicraft had been at considerable pains to prepare a splendid repast, and she had selected the Café de Paris, as being in the first place near, and in the second, very much used to this kind of entertainment, from which she was to be supplied; indeed, she had ordered a dinner for thirty, at thirty francs per head. The table looked magnificently grand; a long epergne ran nearly the full length of it, ornamented with vases, peculiarly neat, and adorned with flowers of the rarest and richest qualities. Those who, five years ago, professed great knowledge in the gastronomic art, might have wished that the *déjeûné* should have been supplied from the Rocher de Cancale; but since the proprietor was once heard to say, as he was rebuked for an execrable dinner for which he had charged six hundred francs, "Oh, it's quite good enough

for Englishmen, they are my victims, and I make more by those fools than all the inhabitants of Paris put together!" and moreover, since it is a well-known fact that the wines are execrable, excepting one or two sorts, for which the lowest price is twelve francs, Mrs. Handicraft, following the advice of those who had been plundered by this victimizer of Englishmen, had recourse to the Café de Paris, and was not, as will be seen, very badly served.

It matters very little who sits at the top of a French table, or a table served in the French fashion; we have no awkward cutting or "mangling done here;" each dish is carved by the attendants, and handed round to the guests: thus all the bungling of the *mal-adroit* is saved, and the gravy is kept in a dish, instead of its being distributed to half the company for the benefit of the milliners. If Banana had a fault, it was his peculiar delicacy in eating, by which is meant, that he was fastidiously nice in his choice, and rather addicted to having actual proof of the cook's capabilities by trying every dish, than merely gratifying the cravings of

nature, or supporting the exhaustion of hunger. "A good judge," said he, "can always tell, merely from bread-sauce, if the cook has been properly bred to her profession."

"I wish you the most uninterrupted joy, my dear Mr. Banana," said Mrs. Handicraft, as she looked round the well-spread board of this day's work; "may every happiness attend you through life, for your choice is not that of boyish impatience, but the result of a well-placed affection, such as the many years I hope you have to live may improve, and which may make you satisfied that true joy is within the reach of mortals, notwithstanding all the books which have been written to make men miserable."

"*Potage à la Condé aux croutons*," said a waiter, as he leaned over the shoulder of Mrs. Handicraft.

Mrs. Handicraft nodded a kind of dignified assent. It was next offered to Banana, who, having been a little startled at the long-winded wish of his companion, declined it; but he recovered himself sufficiently to say, with a good

pronunciation, "*Je veux bien*," as the following waiter whispered in his ear, "*Potage de bisque*."

"They make the soups well in this country," said Banana, as he hoisted in divers ladles of this rich and really elegant extract of lobsters, &c. "If I mistake not, this is a very expensive dish."

"I believe it is," replied Mrs. Handicraft, "but on such an event as this, we cannot have articles of too high a value. It is, perhaps, the last time we may ever meet together on such an occasion."

Banana looked round. The Viscount was in close conversation with the bride, and the whispers of those two sentimental, but disinterested people, escaped ears more sensitive than my uncle's.

"*La culotte de bœuf à la jardinière*."

"*Oui*," said my uncle, having already become more bold. The soup-plate was whisked away in a moment, and the savoury viand stood in its place.

"They are droll people these," remarked

Mrs. Handicraft; "they have no idea of serving fish directly after soup, but they pall your appetite with rich dishes, before the more simple food is offered."

"*Les truites du lac, sauce Genévoise.*"

"*S'il vous plait,*" responded Mrs. Handicraft. "Mr. Banana, I advise you to try some fish."

"They come so cursedly quick," grumbled Banana, "that one has scarcely time to taste."

"*Les porlaudes au riz à la Valencienne.*"

"What's that—what's that?" said my uncle; "it puts me in mind of India; it looks like a pilau. Were you ever in India, Mrs. Handicraft? A very fine country, I assure you, —such a climate—such dinners—such wines—such ——"

"*La langue de veau garni de croquette.*"

"I have not had time to taste this pilau, a dish I was so fond of, and one which we used constantly to have in India."

"*Arrêtez,* my friend, a moment; you are *trop vite — trop vite.* Do you understand? There's Miss Blondel — I beg her pardon—

Madame Banana, who does not appear to relish the good things; she looks quite sick, I declare."

"Merely, I suppose, the novelty of her situation, Mr. Banana," replied the confidante of the bride. "Perhaps she is unaccustomed to such continual observance, or maybe she is a little overcome by the heat of the room, or these rich dishes may have occasioned—" And here she was stopped short, for Madame Banana was obliged to make a hasty retreat, followed by Mrs. Handicraft.

"I wonder," said a raw-boned, ugly apology for a woman, with a very significant sneer, as she addressed the Frenchman, "if Madame Banana has long been subject to sickness on seeing food. I remember when she was scarcely ever unwell in the morning."

I watched Villeneuve, but his countenance was as placid as Lake Leman in a calm; he merely remarked, "That marriage was enough to make any person feel sick, for the ceremony was the most appalling for any young woman to face."

"Very true," replied the raw-boned lady, "but some people are so pleased at the event, that they could bear even greater anxiety without betraying the least emotion. I dare say Mrs. Banana will be better shortly. I do not think," said the old devil, addressing my uncle, "that you have had the misfortune to marry a generally sick wife; but in a month or so she will be quite well again." The suspicious looks of the married women, the titters and the whispers of the old scandal distributers, might have alarmed a very jealous and a very suspicious husband, and no doubt would so have alarmed my uncle, had not the *vol-au-vent à la Nesle*, with which he was most seriously engaged, completely engrossed his attention; he merely started at his name being mentioned, and nodding indifferently to the raw-boned lady, directed the servant to send her some champaigne. The mistake, and the great coolness of the manner, excited not a little merriment, which was heightened by the lady drinking to his future family; at which moment Mrs. Banana and Handicraft luckily returned. My

uncle made some inquiries, which were very satisfactorily answered, "It was the excitement of the ceremony, and the unusual heat of the apartment." The windows were opened and shut half a dozen times, and the breakfast continued.

"*Les petites timbales à la Balaquine.*"

"What a rum name!" said Banana, at the same time nodding assent. "The French cooks are mighty ingenious in puzzling foreigners."

"Did you ever eat frogs?" said Mrs. Handicraft, who had reseated herself, and who had answered in the affirmative, as the waiter mentioned "*La noix de veau à la gelée.*"

"The ingenuity of these people is excessive," said Banana; "they are the most wonderful inventors of names and dishes I ever heard of. Dear me!—but my wife seems sadly indisposed to-day; she looks as pale as death. But your question, my dear madame, of the frogs, was enough to derange the stomach of a rhinoceros."

"*Laitance de carpe truflée.*"

"*Oui, oui, certainement,* the best dish of French cookery, the most delicate of all imagi-

nary dainties; a dish worthy of Lucullus; equally digestible by the half-consumptive, languishing girl, or the voracious stomach of my amphibious nephew. Robert, my boy, taste this dish, it is delicious; like all good things though, very sparingly offered."

"*Les perdreaux en salmi.*"

"Hold, hold, enough," said my uncle, who was now in excellent spirits, and who could not help extolling the good taste and liberality of Mrs. Handicraft to the skies: "It was a feast fit for an emperor; the wines good, and Johnson's Pichon by no means the worst of the selection." (By-the-by, that Johnson deserves to make a fortune.)

"*Les cuisses de volaille à la Bellevue.*"

"Good God! how indelicate," said Mrs. Handicraft, "but——"

"Very tempting," said the sexagenarian, repeating the words "*Cuisses de volaille à la Bellevue*—what an extraordinary people! *S'il vous plait;* as long as I am able to eat or to feast, I will never desert such a treat, or relinquish such a pleasure; the sauce is good, very good."

And in this manner did my uncle actually taste of all, without meeting the fate of the cow in the clover-field.

"I should very much like to know," said the frolicsome old gentleman, "the names of all the things I have been eating; I must keep the catalogue in my red-box, and preserve it with my Cortes bonds." On inquiring of the waiter, a "*menu*" was promised, and stood in all its glory, thus:—

2 *Potages.*

Le potage à la Condé aux croutons—Potage de bisque.

2 *Relevés.*

La culotte de bœuf à la jardinière—Les truites du lac, sauce Genévoise.

2 *Flancs.*

Les poulardes au riz à la Valencienne—La langue de veau garni de croquette.

12 *Entrées.*

Le vol-au-vent à la Nesle—Les petites timbales à la Balaquine. La noix de veau à la gelée—Laitance de carpe truflée. Les perdreaux en salmi aux trufles—Les cuisses de

volaille à la Bellevue. La fricassée de poulets à la Baumonn—Les perches de Seine à la Waterfich. Les cotelettes de Pré-salé à la jardinière—La Chartreuse de langue de mouton. Les filets de soles à la Horly, sauce Tomate—Le filet de bœuf à la broche, sauce Madère.

2 *Rots.*

La dinde truflée, sauce Perigueux—Les perdreaux bardé.

2 *Bouts.*

Le biscuits de Savoie sur socle—Le baba sur socle.

12 *Entremets.*

Le céleri braisé à l'Espagnole—La croute aux pointes d'asperges. Les pommes de terre à la maitre d'hotel—Les œufs molets à la chicorée. Le plum-puding au Madère—Le croquenbouche à la Reine. Le gradin de Gateaux, manor—Le gradin de Funchonette. La gelée de citrons à la Russe—La gelée de groseille framboisée. Le blanc manger au lait d'amandes—Le Bavarois à la royale.

Banana ran his eye over the savoury repast, he praised it warmly, and inwardly chuckled

at the expense Mrs. Handicraft had put herself to, in order to make a great show at the marriage. The present, however, he had designed for a very pretty Miss Popkins, was made over to the hostess; and thus Banana thought he had partially requited the lady, whom he hated to his heart's content.—It was now the time for Villeneuve to show that gallantry for which his nation are so unjustly famed. The common idea of the delicate attentions of the French, if handing a chair, or robing a lady, are included in these accomplishments, is fairly enough earned; but to hold them up to the world as patterns of what real gentlemen ought to be—I, for one, call out against the injustice, and recommend those foolish people who cannot be satisfied but when lisping another language, to look at the real English gentleman as the most elegant, the most refined man in the universe. I never yet saw a Frenchman who had not some disgusting trait or another.

Villeneuve proposed the health of the bride, which he prefaced by some rather outrageous

compliments; for Mrs. Banana was a full-blown rose, she was not a bud of virgin modesty; she was too old to be complimented as spring, and too hoary to be placed as summer. Villeneuve's speech was well worded, and with much point; it embraced all the common-place topics on such occasions, and he finished by proposing the health of the bride, and that every happiness might attend her; that a young sprig of the Bananas might live to share the father's wealth and mother's beauty; and, giving three broken English cheers, he sat down, quite satisfied that he had done the last act of kindness he ever intended to do for Mrs. Banana.

The whispers of one or two ladies a little removed from the bride did not escape my notice. In fact, to use a common expression, I sat upon thorns. I knew the inmost secret of Villeneuve's heart; I knew that he calculated upon living entirely from the resources drained from my uncle: but he was ignorant of the near relationship in which I stood with his victim. My own feelings will be better imagined when the substance of my interview with

Villeneuve is explained; and I scarcely could contain myself when the Frenchman proposed the health of Banana, and ridiculed, in pretty plain terms, the general conduct of English husbands. He warned him against jealousy, and recommended him not to enforce those rigid rules, which he was pleased to say the generality of our countrymen commanded in their domestic establishments. The toast was well received, for it was well and wittily expressed; and however much we may disapprove of the substance, yet we all know that a certain respect is paid to the man who, by his talent or his vivacity, can keep the table in a roar.

Banana received the compliment well, and excited some merriment by his earnest promise on no account to allow the green-eyed monster to hold any influence over his happiness; and after many sallies from the viscount, and many sneers from some of the elderly ladies, the company broke up. The bride changed her nuptial robes, and sank down into Mrs. Banana; whilst my uncle, now no longer the independent

bachelor, placed his better half in the hired carriage, and having backed out of the room in rather a hasty manner, did not exactly walk over the bridge with Bijou, but retreated to his snug entresol in the Rue de l'Université; where I propose to leave him, in the full enjoyment of all the honours of matrimony.

The company separated, to kill time (Villeneuve, as he passed me, saying, "Remember your promise,") according to their usual custom—to slide down the stream of life in the generally useless manner one half of the human species get through existence — to scandalize their neighbours, or find fault with their best friends; the great aim being to live, and to get through life:—and so long as no actual pain occurs, or annoyance intrudes itself, they conceive that they answer all the purposes for which they were sent upon earth; and leaving the salvation of their precious souls to their overburthened pastor, endeavour, as occasions may require, to "mimic sorrow, when the heart 's not sad," and to "smile through tears the heart could not retain."

CHAPTER VIII.

> Nay, but he prated,
> And spoke such scurvy and provoking terms
> Against your honour.
>
> *Othello.*

I MUST retrace my steps a little, and make the reader acquainted with my interview with Villeneuve, in order that he may perfectly understand the unfortunate situation in which I was placed. I met him at the place appointed, and we dined in a private room at the Trois Frères Provençaux. Villeneuve had ordered rather a delicious repast, and was warm in the praise of the Burgundy, and most certainly not without reason. As we proceeded with the dinner, so he proceeded to unfold his ideas as to

my state, and to suggest a mode of improvement in regard to my almost exhausted fortune; binding me at the same time by an oath of inviolable secrecy, to which I foolishly consented.

"An Englishman," said Villeneuve, "labours under a great disadvantage in regard to immediate success; for women, who certainly are the occasion of many a man's ruin, are likewise the foundation of their fortunes. Now with us, it is rare that a woman has much at her disposal; whereas, among the many English who reside, or who visit Paris, there are some who have fortunes at their own discretions, or who, on arriving at their majority, must become entitled to considerable money. Those are my victims."

"Victims!" I replied. "Why, even allowing you succeeded in your worst intentions, I can hardly see how you are materially to be benefited, unless you married your victim."

"Married!" retorted Villeneuve, "that is no part of my plan; for once married, and then

half my method is reduced to nothing. No! but as I consider you one of our fraternity, and have admitted you into the pale of friendship, I will not be a niggard as to my disclosures. I will tell you my idea of a first advance, and the progressive steps by which their ruin is certain. But by ruin I do not mean those trivial mishaps which the over-zealous in virtue would suppose; I mean the possession, not of their person, but their purse. I know that sometimes one is obliged to get at the latter by the former; but that is a dangerous expedient, and likely to bring after it the obligation of marriage. To ensure success three or four things are requisite: the first is consummate impertinence, the second an agreeable person, the third, that ever great readiness to do little civilities, and which Ovid remarks as the most certain road to victory; and fourthly, *a pair of moustaches*—You laugh, Monsieur Ganjam—though last, that is not the least; it is quite inconceivable how much more willingly the female ear inclines to the soft whisper of a moustache, than to the

unimpeded voice of the shorn lip. Whether it be that the moustache bespeaks a certain manliness, or that the remembrance of the grand army is not entirely obliterated, I do not know; but this I know, that our most successful men have abjured a razor on that part. It is a folly of your countrywomen; but it is nothing to the last requisite, which is *a title.* Only let any Frenchman leave his name with a title before it, and he is sure of a welcome admission. I, who have read much, am well aware of the blind servility with which the commoner courts the peer; and your novels, which invariably place the enviable title as more conducive to happiness than virtue, have been the primary cause of the folly. A Frenchman, therefore, when he fixes upon his intended victim, fixes likewise on a good name, with a suitable title, both of which he very coolly usurps. If he has the four first requisites, he is certain of his admission into the acquaintance of the lady."

I shook my head.

"You doubt it," continued Villeneuve,

"because you are comparatively a stranger; but I can show you a dancing-master, and that a very inferior one, whom I have seen dancing with one of his own pupils, whom he taught in England, admitted into your best society in Paris, and who of course easily persuaded the willing listener that he was a marquis in disguise, and forced to give lessons on account of his loyal attachment to his then most injured sovereign. Women are fond of any display of loyalty; they naturally think that a man who is faithful to his sovereign would be faithful to a woman; and thus a ready ear is prepared to receive the poison of flattery. We manage that better than you can do in your hoarse, grunting, guttural language; and the Italians better again than we. Now a woman, be she ever so wise in her own conceit, prefers a compliment paid to her beauty, in preference to any acknowledgement of superior wisdom. It was the famous eastern queen who refused a prince because he knelt when he offered his hand; for how could she obey him who knelt to her? The voice of flattery must be

tinged with that of command. No woman admires a man who owns an inferiority to her, for she then despises him. To be successful you must by persuasion assure your victim that she exalts herself when she loves you. Now, Monsieur Ganjam, you have had a lesson in love. Ovid was a great master, but Byron a better. He knew the sex well, when he recommended them to be 'piqued and soothed by turns.' I need hardly tell you, that when once a woman really loves, she is blind to every consequence; her fortune she regards as useful only to secure her lover; she would brave horrors which would startle the firmest, to show and to prove her affection, and in every calamity which infamy could cast upon her lover's name, she will not see it, she cannot believe it; so entirely is she dependant upon his heart, that she would almost worship the man whilst the executioner was about to sever his head. In that respect, when real love has taken command of the female heart, all words fail in picturing her devotedness to assist the man on whom she has fixed her affections, and

vainly may she endeavour to extricate herself. What your poet of love Moore says, is true—'The heart which once truly loves *never* forgets.' Once make her love you, and then—"

"Then," I interrupted, "no one would be base enough to turn that love to his own advantage."

"Certainly not," continued this mentor, "*if he did not want money;* but poverty overlooks a crime or two, and honour is only used as an assertion by those who are obliged to invent means to avoid starvation. I have no money, not a farthing beyond a week's subsistence, and yet I must appear to be in the possession of riches. I am obliged to be more careful of my dress than the man who is known to be affluent. I must not be poor, and appear so. With these chains and waistcoats, this legion of honour, and these moustaches, no one unaccustomed to cope with us would imagine for a moment the poverty of the pocket, or the emptiness of the stomach. But to elucidate my plan as far as I am concerned —(for you I have another method, by which

your assistance shall be most amply repaid)—I have latterly succeeded in winning the affections of one of your English ladies, whom I met at a boarding-house. These are our principal resorts, and there we contrive to procure from the *écarté*-table a sufficiency for the morrow. That woman loves me: we can always be sure of that from the most trifling observance,—the eye which is constantly fixed upon you, which follows wherever you tread, is actuated by some stronger feeling than curiosity; the cheek which reddens at your approach, the tongue which is confused to answer, and the hand which is restlessly employed, are the sure signals that the heart is not in possession of the person in whose bosom it beats. When that is once observed, the triumph is certain. This lady is reported to have a fortune to some amount, that is, she may possess one hundred thousand francs—a mere bagatelle in your country; but here and in Italy a fortune. I wooed her tenderly, and she returned me a real love. I offered to advise her as to the distribution of her property, so as to secure to

her a better interest; but she was contented with what she had already. Foiled in my plan, by which I had hoped to gain possession of her money, I resolved to carry my proposals farther, and I offered her my hand. This we generally do, but without the least idea of ever finishing the engagement, unless the woman has so much that we are certain of affluence for life. She eagerly accepted the proffer, and I in return promised shortly to make her a viscountess, and to settle upon her a vast part of my *terre* at Bordeaux. To be sure, neither one nor the other belonged to me; but it was her aim to be a viscountess, and I had long ago observed the weakness."

"Stop! stop!" I interrupted. "Are you not a viscount?"

"Not I," he coolly remarked; "neither have I any particular right to this decoration: but any man may wear it without fear of detection; he can always say he got it at the revolution."

"And do many sail about under these false colours?" I asked.

"Not a few," replied Villeneuve dryly, "not a few. But hear my story out. I succeeded beyond even my wishes or expectations with the lady. She yielded up even her person to me, and the consequences would have been fatal to her, had not one of your countrymen become lately enamoured of her charms. She pressed me to marry her; I unhesitatingly refused. She asked for the money she had entrusted to my care; it was gone—squandered—gambled. She implored me to save her shame, and I advised her to hide it in the arms of your countryman. In despair of ever gaining me, for my ruin would have followed my marriage, she has accepted him, and they are shortly to be married. And now you have heard my story."

"And what may be this poor fellow's name, sir, on whom you have endeavoured to fix this dishonour?"

"Remember your oath," he replied, "remember that—but I will place myself beyond your power, for I can see your intentions. The name I will never tell you, and the day

may come when we may meet at the table of the happy pair, and ease them of some more of their money."

"I would rather this instant deprive myself of life, than be a partner of such villany," I exclaimed. "I came here to be informed, as I thought, of some method by which I might honestly hope to increase my fortune; but I never anticipated being requested to share in so dishonourable a plot."

"Plot!" said Villeneuve, lifting up his eyes with a kind of measured shyness — "Plot! we do not admit such wavering fellows into our plots. Had you been a man, you might have shared in my success; but I was a fool to fancy that our countries could unite either severally or jointly. We are natural enemies, which neither time nor circumstances can destroy."

"I hope so," I retorted. "The nation which, with all its glory, could burn, pillage and plunder, commit all the cruelties, the extortions, the rapes, the murders, which disgraced the arms of France in Spain, can never

be on terms of real amity with that country which holds such scenes in abhorrence."

"Pray, sir," said Villeneuve, "may I ask in the most civil manner where you were during the American war?"

"In a French prison one half of the time."

"So I should have thought, from your insolent mode of attacking us, and your ignorance in making the remarks. May I ask if you have lately read any works which purport to give a report of the naval operations in the Chesapeake?"

"One or two," I replied. "One justifying it, as far as it was possible, on the score of retaliation; and another denying it altogether, but certainly giving about twenty contradictions to his own words."

"Ah, Monsieur Ganjam, you are getting reasonable, and I have no doubt we shall yet be very good friends, at least on this point. We have been abused for firing Moscow, which we never did; and you have been lauded by this author for burning Washington, which you had no right to do. I wonder

what your countryman would have said, if Napoleon had burned the palace at Potsdam, and one of his aides-de-camp had dressed himself in the king's shirts,* and then written three volumes to prove the respect of private property; or who, for instance, could make this remark, when an enemy lands on an enemy's shore to procure provisions. 'The farms situated in peninsulas were preferred, &c. &c. &c. but occasionally a *hot-headed bully* would arm himself and people, quietly waiting our approach till we were within that distance which enabled each man to make sure of his bird.† They would then let fly a volley, and retreat as fast as the legs of their horses could carry

* "I accordingly doffed my inner garment, and thrust my unworthy person into a shirt belonging to no less a person than the chief magistrate of the United States."—Scott's Recollections.

† "The least resistance to them is fatal. The houses are then burned, and all the property which cannot be carried away, destroyed."—See an account of the Chappows, a very good-natured set of gentlemen, who were very much addicted to a predatory mode of warfare, given in the Penny Magazine, No. 131. The resemblance in the expression when one party were acknowledged robbers, and the other respecters of private property, is extraordinary.

them. This act of *treachery* was punished by taking the stock without paying for it; but, finding that this system had not the desired effect, and that we lost some valuable lives by this *poltroon* mode of avenging themselves, we adopted other and severer measures, which speedily brought them to a sense of their own interest, the most powerful lever we met with in bringing them to reason. Whenever this villanous mode was resorted to, we not only *took what we required*, but on quitting, *set fire to the whole establishment of dead stock*, by way of enlightening the proprietor upon his erroneous tactics.'* Now that is what the lawyers would call proving too much;—in fact, it is merely this: that if a man defended his property, the private property protection was all moonshine; but if he allowed the sworn and determined enemies of his country to be without resistance supplied, then, for his traitor-like behaviour, his enemies did not avail themselves of their firebrands. We Frenchmen are proud of the victories gained by our arms, and

* Recollections of a Naval Life, vol. iii. p. 191.

we should not relish having such bungling historians to mar the very work they wished to uphold."

"How comes it, sir," I asked, "that you seem so well acquainted with our modern authors?"

"If I did not read much, nay constantly," he replied, "I should never succeed so well as I do. From my knowledge of your language, learned within these two years, I am able to understand every word that I read, and most that I hear. But my English friends know not that I understand their language, and sometimes I experience the truth of the old saying, 'Listeners never hear any good of themselves.' But we wander from our subject. I want you to assist me in forwarding this marriage."

"Not I, by heavens! not I. You have mistaken your man, if you think I will lend myself to any such dishonourable act. I would rather break my oath and save her."

"As you like," said Villeneuve: "go your own way, and let us see if honesty, as

you call it, will keep you from starvation. I shall keep my own secrets and be wise; and I have no doubt that we shall meet not one hundred yards from the church where they are to be married; but remember your oath, and remember that, under the sacredness of that obligation, I have revealed the secret, and also that, as I am capable of being a warm friend, so I am likely to be an implacable enemy. I have no doubt of my own success in this affair, and then I shall be a pensioner upon the establishment, and can commence operations in another quarter: but this I will venture to tell you quite as a secret, that no people in the world know less of the real qualities of a fashionable Frenchman than your English residents in Paris. Let them only give a ball and supper, with a good proportion of truffles, and vin de champaigne à discretion, and they will have more marquises, barons, counts, and viscounts, than they could muster together in ten years in their own overtaxed, lawyer-rid country. Adieu, Ganjam, *au plaisir.*"

I looked at Villeneuve as he turned to de-

part, and quietly thanked God that I was rid of a most notable villain;—and little did I dream that I was so shortly afterwards to hear of his death: he fell a victim to his own passions. In following up a similar case to that of Mrs. Banana, he was one day surprised by the brother whilst tenderly instilling his venom of deception into a too ready ear. The words which passed were few. Suspicions and anonymous letters had already awakened the vigilance of the brother, and had prepared him to wreak ample vengeance on the shoulders of Villeneuve. The blow could not be excused; a meeting took place, and the usual barrier-duel was proposed. To this the young Englishman most positively dissented. He had heard that day after day, and morning after morning, his adversary was to be seen popping at fifty paces at little plaster-of-Paris figures, about the size of a thimble, and that, thanks to his patience, his practice, and his own pistols, the aim was unerring. The "Tir au Pistolet," now a very general resort of all young Frenchmen, in order to prepare them

to commit murder, was likewise the resort of Villeneuve. He was a proficient—a cool, dead shot; cool from the knowledge of his own powers, and that coolness always gives courage when challenged. He smiled, as much as to say "it is immaterial to me;" and the next morning he was with his second at the appointed spot.

Nothing has more astonished those who have studied the French character, than the consummate unconcern with which they face death. We hear of suicides in England, because the coroner's inquest brings the whole affair before the public; but in France, people pop out of windows; jump over bridges; swallow poison when they can get it; knock their heads against stones; and actually make parties to die, as we do to dinner. But all this never comes to view, because the newspapers are better employed than retailing "a melancholy accident;" and, besides the natural disgust the French have to such every-day occurrences being made public, the size of their papers would not admit of such lengthy articles.

The *Morgue* is their best repository, and there you will find generally four or five people waiting for recognition by their friends.

"I will not," said young Talbot, "consent to be shot like a chicken at a stake. I know I have no chance that way of obtaining redress for the injury my family have received. I know that my death is certain, even at fifty paces, and I am resolved to have a chance for my life; so just tell that French officer that the only way I will consent to fight, is to have one pistol loaded, and the other not, to draw for first choice, and then to stand within a pace of each other; and may Heaven direct the choice of him whose cause is the most just!"

It is strange, that even before battles men pray to be assisted by a beneficent, benevolent Creator in the work of destruction; as if the mingled hosts dealing out death and destruction—the rude charge of cavalry, or the shock of infantry, could be pleasant to the eyes of Him who made us, who gave us life, and has taught us how to live! To return thanks after the battle is another thing: we may safely

return thanks that we have been spared to repent of our murders; but there is something quite revolting to Christianity, in the belief that the Supreme Being mingles in the contest, or that the results can be gratifying to an all-merciful God. Frederic the Great, certainly no great authority in regard to our established church, and who did not believe that the arm of Omnipotence was extended in his behalf, hearing some officers remark that they ought to thank God for the victory, coolly replied, "There can be no harm in that, but we must not forget the regiment of cavalry who broke through the enemy's line."

Villeneuve did not make the slightest objection to the proposition of Talbot's second, although several of his own countrymen, who had come on the pleasant excursion to witness the fight, strongly and vainly endeavoured to persuade their friend to leave his life to a better chance.

The preparation did not take long. The pistols, both being of course exactly alike, were loaded by the seconds, and enveloped in a

large silk handkerchief. The first choice fell to the lot of Villeneuve, who, placing his hand on the weapons, endeavoured to choose the heaviest; but he who is to stand such a dreadful hazard as the one proposed, must be more than a man in courage, if in such a moment he is cool enough to discriminate between weights to which a single small bullet gives the preponderance. He fixed upon the one he thought the heaviest, and the other was given to Talbot. They were placed upon their respective grounds, and so close that the muzzle of each man's pistol touched his adversary. Talbot expressed himself as ready to die as to commit the murder, but there was no alternative; he himself had proposed the mode of fighting, and the ungenerous precaution taken by his adversary, gave him a little more of the murderous intention than his otherwise truly English feeling could have permitted.

Men face some dreadful sights, but few have seen the parallel to this; neither is it to be thought by my readers as the mere effusion of an imaginary brain. The duel in question

actually took place, and if the names were changed, every particular would be true. Dreadful must it have been for the friends of each; the certain knowledge that one must fall—the excitement, the agitation, the hope, the expectation, almost placed the by-standers in as great an apprehension as the principals. When both were placed on the ground, the seconds of each advanced and took a last farewell: Talbot shook his friend's hand with an earnest trepidation: he merely whispered a few words, and, with a faint smile and fainter accent, said "Good bye." Villeneuve appeared as unconcerned as if he were a casual spectator: he spoke quick and rapidly; nodded to one or two of the company, more as a recognition than as a parting; and had taken leave of his second before Talbot had ended his low whisper.

The words given were merely "Are you ready?" then, "Fire!" Both pistols went off on the second, and both men fell. Villeneuve only turned upon his side, and almost instantaneously died. Talbot was lifted immediately; the closeness of the pistol at the discharge had

knocked him down, and his face was a little injured by the powder; but his worst feeling was that of disgust, when he saw his fallen enemy dead at his feet. The whirl of the brain left him reasonless for some moments, and he fixed his excited eyes upon the corpse; he was hurried from the spot in a dreadful state, and many months elapsed before he was perfectly restored to health or even reason.

There lay Villeneuve, the sworn foe to all Englishmen, having met the fate of almost all professed duellists. He died with a smile of contempt upon his countenance. One of his companions threw his cloak over the corpse; many looked on in silence. There was not a word spoken; the stillness of death had extended itself to the spectators, who, one by one, retired with cautious footsteps, as if fearing to awaken the slumbers of him who had gone to his long account; and who had left behind him a memory so tarnished that friendship would gladly forget it, and had made the enmity he bore to our countrymen a kind of entailed curse upon his survivors.

CHAPTER IX.

———But through the veins
Should jealousy its venom once diffuse,
'Tis then delightful misery no more,
But unmix'd agony.

Economy of Love.

It is said, and I believe truly, that women support themselves in affliction better than men; they gently yield to the storm, whilst we, unable to give way without resistance, worry ourselves into weakness, and thus ineffectually oppose the violence of the tempest. In almost all losses, and almost all sufferings, the female sustains the anguish with fewer complaints than ourselves. But there is one passion of the mind, distinguished as an appetite, that soon undermines all their fortitude, which saps the health, prostrates the spirits, emaciates the

form,—and that is hopeless love. Perhaps, the word 'hopeless' cannot be applied, for I question if there is any passion which can be considered as without hope by the patient. We see the poor enfeebled victim of this appetite stretched upon her couch,—her pallid features, sunken eyes, and attenuated form, mark her rapid approach to the grave; and yet we see the flush of happiness pass for a moment over her cheeks; we catch in her expressions, that although closely pursued by the enemy of us all, still, still she clings to the hope that her love may be returned, and she gradually yields up her spirit in the fervent and sincere belief that her death will be delayed, and hope, which still cheers her to the last struggle, seems to leave on the dead the calm countenance of future expectation.

When Jane was removed to the country, her pride supplied her with fortitude; she seemed afraid of declaring an affection, which she considered as forfeited by the behaviour of Mizen. But in vain she opposed the love she knew she bore him; in vain even pride—and

pride is the strongest in an insulted woman's heart, was opposed to the foe; the enemy had so fairly established himself, that day after day the citadel grew weaker and weaker. Solitude brought fresh supplies to the little besieger, and before a month had elapsed Jane was lingering in sickness, of all the most difficult to cure, for no one "can administer to a mind diseased." At first she had boldly opposed her enemy; but no sooner had the evening closed in, and custom placed her before her music, than her fingers pursued their wonted course, and the airs which he liked, and the song he admired, burst involuntarily forth; then the reaction became the stronger, and thus, from the constant occurrence, she at last fairly surrendered to the enemy she could not conquer, and, giving way to the full scope of her feeling, became shortly seriously indisposed; and having been removed into the country, with no novelty to please, or strangers to amuse, she gradually became weaker and weaker, and at last was condemned to her sofa.

Never did saint bear the anguish of mind with more resignation than Jane: her pleasure was in the remembrance of the many happy hours enjoyed in his society; she retraced in her mind all his kindness and solicitude when I was first lost to them, and she often endeavoured to vindicate his conduct to herself, when she alone might have disregarded it. Books she read, but did not remember; her eyes traversed the allotted number of pages to each volume, but she was unconscious of the subject of her study: one thing alone solaced her, and that was the many reports of his still being alive;—in her own mind he could not die, and thus was the prospect of a meeting continually kept alive in her breast, for she argued, that whilst there was life there was always hope.

Mizen had slowly recovered from the effect of his wound, and after a year's travelling on the continent, after having visited Moscow, and resided in the now almost annihilated Warsaw, he returned through Berlin by Dresden to Frankfort, and thus crossing the frontier at Sarbrook entered the French territory. It

would be idle to suppose he felt the same overwhelming passion, when he was so constantly changing the scene and varying the people. One amusement only gave way for another; the excitement of travelling, the strange aspect of a strange people, the various national monuments of victories, the long galleries of paintings, the historical records and remembrances, and the necessity of surmounting the first difficulties of a new language, gave to Mizen that occupation of the mind, which is the greatest barrier to love, and which tends more to obliterate domestic comforts and recollections than any other excitement known but gambling. He had stood within the walls of the Kremlin, and looked from the tower of Ivan over the plains of the Moskowa; the new city, with many a mark of the difference of style, could not fail to interest him;—and when from the summit of the tower the Sparrow-hills were pointed out, over which the army of Napoleon marched in military glory, and over which he retreated, leaving behind him those who were wounded, in a city on fire, with an enemy

closing around him, inured to the climate, protected from the cold, and supplied with all necessaries, — and there, in the Kremlin, saw the miraculous saint who defended the ancient wall of holy Russia, for when the enemies of that city endeavoured to blow up the citadel, that glass was unbroken, although all around it was ruin and desolation;—who could stand in such a place and think of love? Again, who could reside in the almost deserted Warsaw,—who could, in the heart of a nation destroyed, convey his thoughts to the heart of her who loved him? the blood-freezing tyranny of a Constantine would check the current of the warmest heart. Again, at Berlin, amongst its splendid buildings, its numerous theatres, its patriotic people, who could coldly turn from this, to have but one temple in the heart, and worship it? The Dresden galleries, and the Frankfort follies, might wean the attention of a romantic boy; and those who constantly change the scene of life, are never very well pleased to look at one object, or quietly sit down to mope out existence, away from the busy haunts of

men. It is truly said in the Cosmopolite, that the man who has only seen his own country, knows no more of the world than the man is informed of the merits of a work who has only read the title-page; and the father who keeps his son dodging about a hay-field in Somersetshire, is not very likely to see him a star amidst the darkness of a country neighbourhood.

It was a month after my uncle's marriage that I met Mizen: his friend and former companion had quitted him at Berlin, and having crossed to Hamburgh, was soon in England. Mizen preferred continuing his journey to the French capital, and having arrived safe at Meurice's hotel, he had dared, without a guide, to wander in the gardens of the Tuileries. It happened that I was crossing from my uncle's when I met him: we recognised and saluted immediately; all the old animosity had subsided; and without any previous bungling at any prefatory remarks, he put his arm in mine, and commenced his conversation. I had much to tell him, but nothing which surprised him

more, than the announcement of Banana's marriage, and it was then that he related to me the anecdote of the court-martial. He was quite certain that inevitable misery must follow the match, for the long-formed ideas and customs of sixty are not to be changed in a moment; and at that age, he remarked, men are generally so old and so wise, that they do not like being dictated to, or even counselled. "But your sister, Ganjam," said Mizen, whilst a blush covered his tanned features, "is she alive and well?"

"Alive she is," I responded, "but well she is not, although I know very little about her; for since our unfortunate meeting, and the report of your death was so widely circulated, she never would see me, whom she regarded as the murderer of her once imagined husband. It is a painful recollection, Mizen," said I, "and I would fain obliterate it," and saying this, I gave an involuntary squeeze.

"Stop, stop, my dear Ganjam," said Mizen, "you have no idea how you hurt my feelings by your involuntary motions; it is my wound-

ed arm you are jambing to a mummy with that bony appendage of your's. Zounds! you hug like a bear!"

I could not help smiling at the cool manner in which he adverted to his own misfortunes, and how jocosely he addressed the author of all his pains and aches; but he continued,—

"Alive, you say, but ill. I am glad and sorry. But who could report my death? for I was never in danger for more than half-an-hour. That German doctor, who declared that half the limbs in the grand army that were slashed off by the butchers, might have been as well as my own, if only left alone, never apprehended any serious consequences, excepting, indeed, whenever I fevered myself into the hope of one day shooting that French scoundrel, who was kind enough to beg you to shoot me. And I vow to Heaven, if ever I meet him, short shall be the moments between either his death or mine."

"Well, Mizen," I replied, "you may save yourself all your fevering upon that subject; for yesterday morning that infamous scoundrel

was shot by one of our countrymen, and he is just as dead as any of the grand army he used to hector about." I then related the facts which I have mentioned, and urged him to walk to my uncle's, who I knew was at home, and in no very enviable mood. To this he assented, and starting through the trees, we directed our course towards the Rue de l'Université.

Banana, the morning after his marriage, was wonderfully different from the gay bachelor of the week before; he was thoughtful, sullen, moody, discontented with himself, suspicious of his wife, and jealous of her character. The knot was tied, and no one living could untie it; and therefore, as he walked up and down his *salon*, waiting for his wife to make breakfast, he bethought himself of all his miseries and follies, and inwardly confessed that he had now committed the most unfortunate act of his unfortunate life. Still he endeavoured to reconcile the act; yet every now and then a kind of shiver came over him—the foreboding of some near disaster. He had wound himself up

to desperation, and likewise to the necessity of an "inflammation in his weekly bills," when his servant came in, and announced that one of the *garçons* from the Café de Paris wished to see him.

"See me, John!" said he. "Why, what the devil can he want with me? Perhaps some *douceur*, because I have made a fool of——"

Here he stopped short, and by way of getting out of the confusion into which he had half tumbled, desired the stranger might be admitted; and in walked a dapper little fellow, with a very considerable roll of paper in his hand. It was, as these polite people always term it, the *little* account, which monsieur would be kind enough to inspect—and—to pay.

With a kind of absent look, Banana mechanically opened the paper, chuckling within himself at the mistake which he imagined the gentleman had made, when lo! his eyes fell upon the bill, and there he saw in that nasty, cramped, unreadable hand in which all shop-

keepers of Paris send their accounts, "*Déjeûné à la fourchette commandé*," nine hundred francs. Then almost every article was recharged. Then came champaigne, hock, chambertin, punch à la romaine, and the devil hardly knows what else besides, bringing the amount, with attendance, café, chasse, &c. &c. to sixteen hundred francs, which the obliging gentleman hoped, after having inquired concerning the health of madame, that monsieur would find quite correct, and if it was perfectly *convenient*, pay.

Banana looked first at the bill, then at the bearer, and then at the bill again. He scratched his right ear, put his face into a thoughtful expression of countenance, turned the bill over and over again, and then desired the bearer to take it to one Madame Handicraft, giving at the same time her address. The young gentleman here intimated, "that the last-named madame had desired him to come to him, and that he hoped monsieur found the account correct."

"Very correct, no doubt," said Banana;

"but I never ordered this, and most certainly will never pay for it."

At this announcement the polite gentleman smiled, and, after entering into monsieur's joke in the kindest manner, asked if monsieur would call at the Café de Paris when convenient. Leaving the bill on the table, he made a most elegant exit, and like all monkeys in descending from trees or *entresols*, made only one bound, and was in a trice trotting over the bridge on his return. Before Banana could call him back, or get his servant to answer the bell, which he pulled at as often as the village bell-ringers on a nuptial-day, the polite gentleman was half-way home, skimming by the numerous hordes who frequent that thoroughfare, touching his hat to every third woman, and uttering "Pardon! pardon!" as he wedged himself in between the mass of bones which the tailors had made to look like men. Banana's pace up and down his room was rather quicker than usual; his turns were shorter; he took a kind of fisherman's walk—one step and overboard; and when the *pallid* Mrs. Banana

entered with a modest and overpowering appearance to kiss her dear and much-loved husband, he was in such a rage, that he felt more inclined to bite, than to return that salutation of his *better* half. She looked astonished at the reception, and it was not long before she pouted those little lips, and actually squeezed a tear from her eyes. She sat down to the breakfast-table, whilst Banana did the same, taking hold of the bill, and heeding that much more than his wife's grief. The day after the marriage, and the first quarrel evidently near! Mrs. Banana placed her white cambric to her eyes, sighing bitterly, her little throat moving about as if she was bolting an apple; and occasionally a gentle noise, something between a sob and a hiccup escaped her. It was impossible for Banana to stand this long; so he arose like an elderly Apollo, and placing one hand on the back of her neck, he leaned forward as far as nature permitted him, and kissed away the falling tear, soothing the artful lady with many sweet speeches and promises; then drawing his chair close to her's, and looking

most tenderly on her swimming eyes, he bungled out an excuse that he had been surprised and annoyed by the very questionable conduct of that thread-paper of a female Mrs. Handicraft. This little speech at once opened the eyes of Mrs. Banana, and having again wept a little, she elicited from her husband a promise not to be angry with her for her *first* fault, and then with a pretended fear told the whole story from beginning to end, as far as the breakfast was concerned, and finished by praying her husband not to compromise her by forcing Mrs. Handicraft to pay the long bill. Banana looked at her for a minute without speaking a word, and then coldly asked, if she, his wife, had not told him at the embassy that Mrs. Handicraft had prepared the feast, and asked all the world to it. She did not deny it, and Banana merely remarked, that he had read, "that a woman who would practise a deceit before marriage, would not hesitate to continue so to do after she was married."

Mrs. Banana had a temper of her own, and she now thought it was the best time in the

world to show it, in order to let her husband understand that she was not to be quietly abused for the future; and therefore, in a moment the tears were dried, the apple was bolted, and the tongue was in motion instead of the handkerchief; still did she show, that even in the torrent of her "anger she could beget a smoothness," and thus, like the gentle commencement of a gale she began:—

"It is cruel, my dear Banana, to remember old sayings, and to apply them to a new wife. The deception is one of no consequence; it neither hurts you nor degrades myself. To a man of your fortune, what is the expense? literally nothing; and yet you have the bad taste to remember such 'wise saws,' and foolishly and maliciously to apply them to me. But I am no child, neither am I one who needs protection. I am your *wife*, and know what is due to my situation. I neither sold myself for your money, nor entrapped you for your wealth; and now I learn by painful experience, that when the young and the fascinating marry the old and the suspicious,

they must expect the misery to which I have foolishly doomed myself." Saying which she looked unutterable daggers, burst into a flood of tears, and left Banana to eat his breakfast in all the dignity of solitude.

From that day Banana was wretched; in vain the generous and forgiving temper with which Nature had so bountifully supplied him, was called to his aid. As he gave way in appearance, his wife advanced in reality; the first relinquishment of his right, was the prelude to his future slavery. His wife was an active enemy, who knew how to profit by the weakness of her opponent; and as Banana had failed to "cut the cat's head off," as the wary old Persian did who married a scold, he gradually sunk and sunk, until he was as regular an old henpecked husband as ever drew the breath of life. Day after day he felt the chains binding him the faster; and at the time when I met Mizen, and proposed to visit him, my poor Banana had condemned himself to his own room, whilst his better half was to be seen in every shop, flaunting about in every public place—followed by the gay, and courted by the amorous.

Banana received us with a smile of welcome; but oh, how different from that which he used to wear! To Mizen, however, he seemed to feel a warm attachment, and he expressed himself overjoyed to meet him; more especially as he always believed him dead. He looked with more affection upon me, I thought; although, poor fellow, he was more to be compassionated than myself. The conversation took its turn from Mizen; who, with a smile upon his countenance, congratulated my uncle that he had at last given up single misery, and taken a companion to share his happiness.

A deep, deep sigh escaped him: it was evident that the prospect of old age had nothing consolatory to offer; and as he silently bowed to the compliment, I verily believe that had he attempted one word he would have burst into tears.

"Is your heart as warm as it was, Mizen?" he at last said, "and do you know that Jane is not expected to survive much longer? When do you return to England?"

It was now Mizen's turn to be a little coy of

his words, but he soon recovered, and answered in his usual straightforward manner,—that his intention was to leave Paris that evening if possible, and his first endeavour would be a reconciliation with Jane, to whom he candidly confessed himself as affectionately attached. This led to a more cheerful conversation, and Banana, after detailing Jane's history until she retired into the country, gave her address, and promised to write a letter — a thing he abhorred even before he married—in order to pave the way for the sailor; and in fact, to state Mizen's wishes and his own so clearly, that he had no doubt that he would be a welcome visiter at Jane's retreat.

All faces were now brightening up: Banana forgot his wife and her spirit, and even gave way to a laugh. It was merely the ghost of his former gaiety, but still it was a laugh; and that had not visited him since the day of his marriage. "Hope is always liberal," it is said, and Mizen certainly indulged in the liberality of hope: we were all joyous, even I forgot my misfortunes, and fancied myself happy, when

the door opened, and in walked Mrs. Banana, followed by a servant, who was laden with half the trumpery of Paris, intended as ornaments to stuff upon a table, and render walking in the room a business of danger. She looked excessively annoyed at her visiters: to me she only gave a distant glance of recognition, and when Mizen was introduced she hardly deigned to notice him. She had evidently established herself as the master of the house, and Banana was a cipher in the establishment. Having placed her purchases upon a table she sat down, and by way of obliterating the rudeness with which she had commenced, she addressed herself to Mizen, and gradually relaxed into the elegant woman she naturally was, and by her fascinating manner soon cleared away the clouds which she had spread over the party. Her conversation was principally addressed to Mizen relative to his travels; she had read much, and knew the manners of most countries: her remarks were cautiously and cleverly made, and soon left Mizen impressed with an

idea that it was Banana's fault if he were not happy with such a treasure.

"I have been, my dear," she said to her husband, "half round Paris, and could hardly find an article worth spending money upon; and as for news, we have not heard a word for these two days, for our courier of intelligence, Villeneuve, is gone into the country, and has not as yet returned."

Knowing as I did every part of her and his history, I felt as if I could have sunk into the ground. It was evident that he had been a constant guest since her marriage, although no one else was admitted; the sighing for news, which only came through his lips, his long absence of two days, and the manner in which she expressed herself, evidently showed how much she valued the person who had dishonoured her. Mizen was about to answer, when I made a sign of silence; he instantly knew my wishes, but having commenced an answer, was not adept enough to turn it quite clear of the subject, which was Villeneuve, and whom, Mizen imagined, he had been acquainted with.

"He is tall, handsome, and wears moustaches," replied madame, evidently much interested in the subject; "he fought under the Emperor, and was in almost every battle that was fought at which Napoleon was present."

"And every one else that ever was fought," replied Banana, "if you believe all that fellow says. I hate the sight of him; he is idle, impertinent, and a braggadocio."

"And who made you a judge of such men, I wonder?" replied Mrs. Banana. "We are told how envious our sex are, but men are ten thousand times worse, and would pluck the laurel from the brows of their best friend, if they themselves were not privileged to wear it."

"Poh! poh!" grunted Banana; "what laurel did he ever win, except at a gaming-table or a lady's boudoir? To be sure, to listen to him, one would believe he was Napoleon's ghost."

My time had arrived; had my death been fixed if I betrayed the secret, I could not have kept it; the sneer of contempt she wore as she looked at her husband, would have untied

my tongue, and thus I hurriedly expressed myself :—" Hero or no hero, whatever you see of him for the future will only be his ghost."

" What can you mean, Robert?" said Mrs. Banana, her heart foreboding from my manner that I knew more than I had expressed ; " Have you seen him to day ?"

" Not to-day," I replied, " nor yesterday."

" Why this mysterious manner?" she replied ; " I suppose you are leagued with your uncle against him, and have desired him to absent himself from this house."

" If I could complain of anything in regard to my uncle and yourself, it would be this, that whilst the door is shut against me, it is open, or rather was open, to as despicable a villain as ever lived—a man of as bad a character, who to the practised arts of a gambler, added every worse crime which would disgrace a man—I mean Villeneuve."

" You mean what is false," replied Mrs. Banana ; " and if, when the door is opened to you, your time must be employed in slandering my best friend behind his back, when you

would shake to do so before his face, I will trouble you to spare me the honour of any more such unexpected or such unwished-for visits. You had better retire," she continued, "to your low haunts in the Palais-Royal, and cease to abuse the man who actually has taught you how to exist, and on whose bounty you have fed and fattened."

"Hear me, Mrs. Banana, whisper only one sentence to you, after I have disclaimed what you have advanced." And going up to her as she inclined her inquisitive ear, I said, so that I was inaudible to better ears than my uncle's, "I know all—*all*, and you shall never see him again."

A deadly paleness overspread her countenance, and she sunk upon the sofa from which she had risen to receive my communication. She fixed her eye upon me, searching my very heart, and she eagerly beckoned me to stay, seeing I had taken my hat, and was making preparations to depart.

"What is this?" said Banana, rising from his chair. "I command you, Robert, to tell

it to me. See what has happened. Good heaven! how pale she is, and how she trembles! Mizen, reach me that bottle. You scoundrel you," he continued, "you have done this."

"My dear uncle," I replied, as he chafed her temples with some eau-de-cologne, "I have only done my duty to *her*. Had I done it to you, the unhappiness which is in store would never have belonged to you. The lot you have drawn, you must keep; and well may you hate me for the only improper act I have ever committed in my life, and that is, having religiously kept my word. Had I been a liar, you would have been happy."

During this short sentence Mrs. Banana kept imploring me to be silent. There is no coward like guilt: it is conscience that makes cowards of us all. She burst into tears, and in a convulsive manner exclaimed:—"For God's sake, Robert, spare me—oh, spare me! Speak not, I pray—I implore you."

"Robert," said my uncle, "if you ever loved me, or if I ever had the slightest claim

upon your duty and affection, as your mother's own brother, I insist upon your unravelling this mystery. I have a heavy weight upon my mind—I have a feeling which I cannot express; but now the moment is arrived, and leave me you shall not, until you have given me reason to believe, that the communication you have made to my wife in no ways touches my honour; but, if it does, old as I am, by G—! no one shall keep him from my vengeance."

"He is beyond it," I replied—"he is dead!"

"Gracious heaven!" exclaimed the guilty woman: "Dead!"

"Ay, dead," I coolly replied—"gone to his long account, to leave you to repent and sorrow over your past follies. Another time, my dear uncle, another time for another disclosure. See—she faints, and we had better call in medical assistance; but if you wish to see at once the extent of your misery, call not in her doctor—the one sent by Villeneuve, but send for another, and bid him report to you what will be the consequence of this scene."

"Stay, Robert, stay, I desire you," said the poor afflicted man; "but send for the doctor. Stay, and tell me, for I could better hear it from your lips than from a stranger. There," said he, as he relinquished his wife to the cares of her servant—"there, she is gone; shut close that door. Tell me now, Robert, I have life enough left to revenge; tell me what is the matter, and how has the name of Villeneuve such power upon my wife?"

"I dare not tell you," I replied, "I dare not; but this I tell you, she is unworthy of your affections. Leave her; do not insist upon making me miserable by forcing me to be a liar. I have done already more than I ought to have done, and now I leave you. To-morrow, when Mizen is on his road to happiness, I will relieve your misery."

The scene which followed my departure may be easily imagined: the medical gentleman at once betrayed the secret; and whilst the wife was left in a state of great danger, the husband was screwing his courage to part from her for ever: his last interview showed

the lurking love and generosity of his heart. In vain she endeavoured to alter his fixed determination: she in vain promised, and in vain repented. The slightest speck of dishonour never had disgraced Banana: he was a man who held the idea of an improper act as almost equivalent to the committal, and to foster dishonour he was resolved never to do. He therefore prepared to put his scheme into execution: he left her most amply provided for; and as he took her hand for the last time, a tear fell upon it. She looked wistfully in his face; again he inclined his head towards her lips, and kissing her affectionately, he said:

"I forgive you, and may Heaven in all its kindness do the same! I shall not live long to brood over my misfortunes. God forgive you, and grant that the last moments of your life, when you part from this world, may not be equal to the pang I feel at severing myself from my wife. Farewell! and with this last kiss of love and forgiveness I go for ever."

CHAPTER X.

Hope dies; and why should love survive,
To number every burning tear—
Dreams which can make us dread to sleep—
Voices we almost sigh to hear?

SPICER'S *Julia Gonzala.*

THAT virtue always finds its own reward, the experience of ages has attested; and equally certain it is, that however much the guilty may appear happy, yet is he ill at ease within himself, if the small still voice is unceasingly heard, and although the outward and visible sign may be that of joy and hilarity, the inward and spiritual warning is that of sorrow and remorse.

I do not intend, at the very conclusion of this work, to move the reader's tender feelings

by a vivid description of the scene which ensued after Mizen was announced and received by Jane. A heart so good as her's, so constant in its affection, and so true in its love, required only the first advance from her lover to yield to the acknowledgement of his attachment. We can all very well imagine how closely her hands, if not her lips, were pressed; we can fancy the expressions of devotion and regard, and can, without much stretch of the diction of lovers, convey to our minds the numerous falsehoods which the enraptured sailor uttered, when he swore by all the oaths admitted in Cupid's calendar, that from the time he landed at Hamburgh to the time he knocked at her door, one only image occupied his thoughts; and that, amidst all the stirring scenes with which he had been surrounded, and amidst all the perils, all the novelties, all the excitement which had environed him, his thoughts, disdaining the trammels which such circumstances might have occasioned, were only for her; and his hope, alone prompted by his love, was once more to

fall at her feet, and sue for pardon and her hand.

Such, indeed, are the general white lies which lovers have recourse to, but they are mostly elicited by the sly suggestions of the woman; and no great harm is done, if, in order to please her we admire, we draw our words from any well but that of truth, if we do not injure any one by so saying, and really do give pleasure by the utterance. In spite of Marryatt's assertion, "That all lies are disgraceful, and that white lies are only the gentleman-ushers to black ones;" yet are we obliged, in the civilities of life, frequently to fall into these trivial oversights. Say "Not at home, John," is frequently so loudly desired, that the very person whom it is intended to gull, would be the principal witness of the untruth.

Following the course of all my predecessors in the novel-school, I intend to marry Mizen and Jane, and to give them their reward for the crosses they have experienced, and the constancy of both parties. "May they live for ever!"

as the Persians say, " and the shadows of both never be less!" Mizen will soon grow fatter, and settle down into the respectable-sized man one likes to see married. I can never look with any great veneration upon an under-sized husband; and yet, very strange as it is, these little bodies almost invariably choose tall wives, and then are quite disgusted if they are looked down upon. Jane slowly recovered, sufficiently to be led to church; she married, and the tender assiduities of the sailor-husband soon restored her to health. When I say that her happiness was complete, I may add, as the Turks do, " What can I say more?"

The diligence which conveyed my uncle to Verdun, never had a more sorrowful load. He had taken the whole *coupée* to himself, and with his never-failing travelling companion, his red box, he left Paris at about five in the evening, on the 10th of June. The weather was fine, beautifully fine; the streets of the metropolis were crowded by the laughter-loving citizens; and although they occasionally slipped over the greasy pavement, or received

the benefit of all the mud a diligence-wheel could sprinkle, yet, after the first *sacré*, they resumed their hilarity, and laughed at their misfortunes. It was true Banana passed them and looked at them, but he saw them not; they passed like spectres before his eyes. He was so absorbed in grief, that he was incapable even of thought; more like an automaton than a man, he was jolted to his destination. He had never tried that sovereign remedy for love or grief, "eating." He was sick, miserably sick, heavy at heart, and the pulse, which but a short time since beat high with expectation and with hope, now languidly testified the sudden change which had come over the spirit of his dream. Arriving at Verdun, he descended from the clumsy vehicle in which he had been enclosed, and would have remained in the inn for ever, but he dreaded observation. It was evident even to himself, that he was at times guilty of strange behaviour, and the manner of the people about the house, who eyed him suspiciously, soon disgusted him with his abode. He sighed for solitude, and two days after-

wards was pursuing his journey, he hardly knew where, in search of forgetfulness. He had purchased an open carriage, and journeyed slowly towards the German frontier. He was now alone in the world—the man who had before never quitted society; he was without even a servant, he was ignorant of the German language, and was continuing his route until some lonely village should appear, in which he could, unmolested, lay down his load of life. In this unenviable mood he continued his route, varying it from left to right as his fancy struck him, until he arrived in the vicinity of Lindenfels, a romantic town, situated near a range of mountains, half way between Darmstadt and Manheim. He was struck by the lonely appearance of a cottage, about a mile from the town, and which barely could be seen from the road. The postilion had been making preparations to blow a long-winded tune on his bugle in honour of the traveller's arrival, and likewise to give the lazy postilion who was to succeed himself in the honour of jolting a jog-trot to the next stage, a preparatory notice, when Ba-

nana, by divers strange sounds and signs, manifested his desire to stop. The driver pointed to the town of Lindenfels, and expended many words in explanation: these were useless, for Banana did not comprehend the meaning of one, excepting "wagon," which, in spite of his constantly saying, "Carriage, curse you, and not waggon," the postilions invariably styled his vehicle. Making signs for the postilion to remain, Banana, like a desperate man, made a plunge down the narrow path, which terminated in a neat gate, and was the entrance to a small garden which fronted the cottage: it looked peculiarly neat and clean, and at once my uncle formed his determination of settling there. The door was opened by a homely-looking woman, who, to the delight of Banana, spoke French fluently: it required not a long story to make the proposition of renting two rooms; and she, who had seen far better days, was by no means slow in closing a bargain with the elderly gentleman, whose liberality as to rent, would render the year's income much more satisfactory to herself. The little luggage

was soon removed, the red box was handed into the bed-room, and about six o'clock in the evening, Banana, not from hunger or inclination, but merely because he thought it was requisite to have dinner, placed himself before the table; and the first intimation he received that a dinner was on the table was, as his mind wandered far from the scene, putting his hand into some hot soup. A German maid, with light hair and round face, who waited patiently in the room, laughed outright, and Banana only felt the misfortune and the burn disagreeable, inasmuch as it brought a pair of bright eyes to watch him more closely. Shortly afterwards, having placed a piece of bread on his plate, and cut it, and salted it, as if it had been meat, he arose from the table, and making signs that he had finished, took his hat and walked in the garden. It was a beautiful evening, and the garden, which was intersected by a clear quick stream, and adorned with numerous flowers, and decorated with bowers, apparently "for whispering lovers made," offered a retreat to the Unfortunate Man. He

walked to the mossy bank, and sitting down fixed his eyes upon the water which bubbled past him, and which seemed a companion from the continued noise it occasioned. The evening stole on, the sun had set, and the moon and stars shone forth in all their splendour; the night-dews rose and fell, the birds of darkness sung their long-continued note. Wrecked as he now was by misfortune, the beauty of the scenery, the solemn loneliness, the calm which creeps over the minds of others, wooed him not back to himself; there he remained, his eyes still fixed upon the running water, his hands clasped, his head bent downwards, and if any more certain signs of life were given but breathing, it was in the frequent long and deep, deep sigh which escaped him. At length, the hostess, willing to retire to bed, and anxious to see her house secured, approached Banana and warned him of the lateness of the hour; the cold damp had saturated his clothes, and when he moved he felt the sudden chilness shoot through all his veins. When left to himself, he knelt by the side of his bed. His

strange behaviour had excited the attention of the servant, and she watched him narrowly. Long and long did he continue in apparent prayer: he spoke out loud, and lifted his eyes to Heaven in fervent adoration. When done, he seemed to shiver again with the cold; but his eyes falling on his red box, he forgot the necessity of changing his clothes, and sat down with great eagerness to write. Paper after paper he read, and at last he came to the object of his search—his Will. He tore it into the smallest pieces, and threw some out of the window, some he placed in the stove, and the rest he carefully distributed about the room. He then commenced writing, and after about ten minutes, feeling another shivering fit, he hastily arose, undressed and went to bed. The light was extinguished, and the maid retired, perfectly persuaded that the guest, although curious, had, if he was mad, great method in his madness; for, previously to extinguishing the light, he replaced all his papers in his box, and locked it carefully; he wound up his watch, and with the greatest care, brushed his coat,

and folded it up neatly; and he tried the windows to see if they were properly fastened.

> "The morn is up again, the rosy morn,
> With breath all sweetness, and with cheek all bloom;
> Laughing the clouds away with cheerful scorn,
> And living as if earth contain'd no tomb,
> And glowing into day."

The usual occupations of those who live so near a town, and who earn a doubtful livelihood by the sweat of their brows, reminded the inhabitants of the cottage that the hour for slumbering had passed; but hour and hour passed away, and Banana still slept, or remained inactive. Noon came and passed; and now the good old lady was troubled with some serious apprehensions for her lodger. At four o'clock she was in a fever from fear, and she resolutely determined to see him. She knocked, she spoke, she called; but no answer soothed her anxiety. She desired her servant to open the door, and in an instant she saw Banana stretched upon the bed of death. He was not quite gone, neither did he seem in pain; but his mouth, his livid lips, his glassy eye, told the unwelcome news. The

girl was instantly despatched to Lindenfels for a medical man; but long before he arrived my uncle had breathed his last. Before he died he stretched his hands towards the red box, and made signs to open it; the landlady in vain tried, for it was a Bramah's lock. The poor Unfortunate Man endeavoured to speak; but, although the lady listened with the utmost attention, she could not catch one articulate sound. He was aware of this, and made signs that he wished to write; and when pen and paper were brought, he ineffectually tried and tried, and in the very effort to write my name, for the R was legible, he died.

Who he was no one could guess: he came but the night before, and he was dead the following day. The authorities were apprized of his end, and decently buried him. They placed seals upon his effects, which they previously examined, and at last, by way of discovery, published the circumstance in one of the Darmstadt journals, taking the cover of a letter, of which they found many in the box, by way of designation. It was copied into

Galignani's journal, and thus fell under my observation. I immediately repaired to his miserable relict: she was so ill that she was incapable of receiving the intelligence; but Banana's brother, who had arrived in Paris in consequence of a letter which the Unfortunate Man wrote under excitement of no ordinary kind immediately after the doctor had betrayed the secret, welcomed me as a nephew. I showed him the paper, and we instantly repaired to Lindenfels. Here everything was restored to his brother, and one of the first objects which met our eyes on opening the red box, was the new will, dated the evening previous to his death, and from the cottage in which he died. After bequeathing an ample income to his wife, which he did in words of great affection, he left a handsome sum to his brother, and the conclusion ran thus:—"To my dear nephew Robert, for having so kindly and so feelingly convinced me of my misfortunes, and in order to alleviate his own, I leave the sum of ——;" and thus the will terminated, without

a sum being mentioned, and without his name being attached to the deed. It was of course worse than useless. His wife shortly afterwards dying, the brother, as next a-kin, inherited the fortune, and thus my last hope was snapped.

I returned to the French capital, with poverty staring me in the face. My last misfortune had occurred. I was destitute, or nearly so. I had no hope—no encouragement.

You who would farther trace the life of one on whom the smile of fortune had never fallen, whose early days were spent in slavery, and whose noon of existence knew no comforts, may look for farther sorrow, crime, and repentance, in the "Confessions of a Ruined Gambler."

THE END.

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